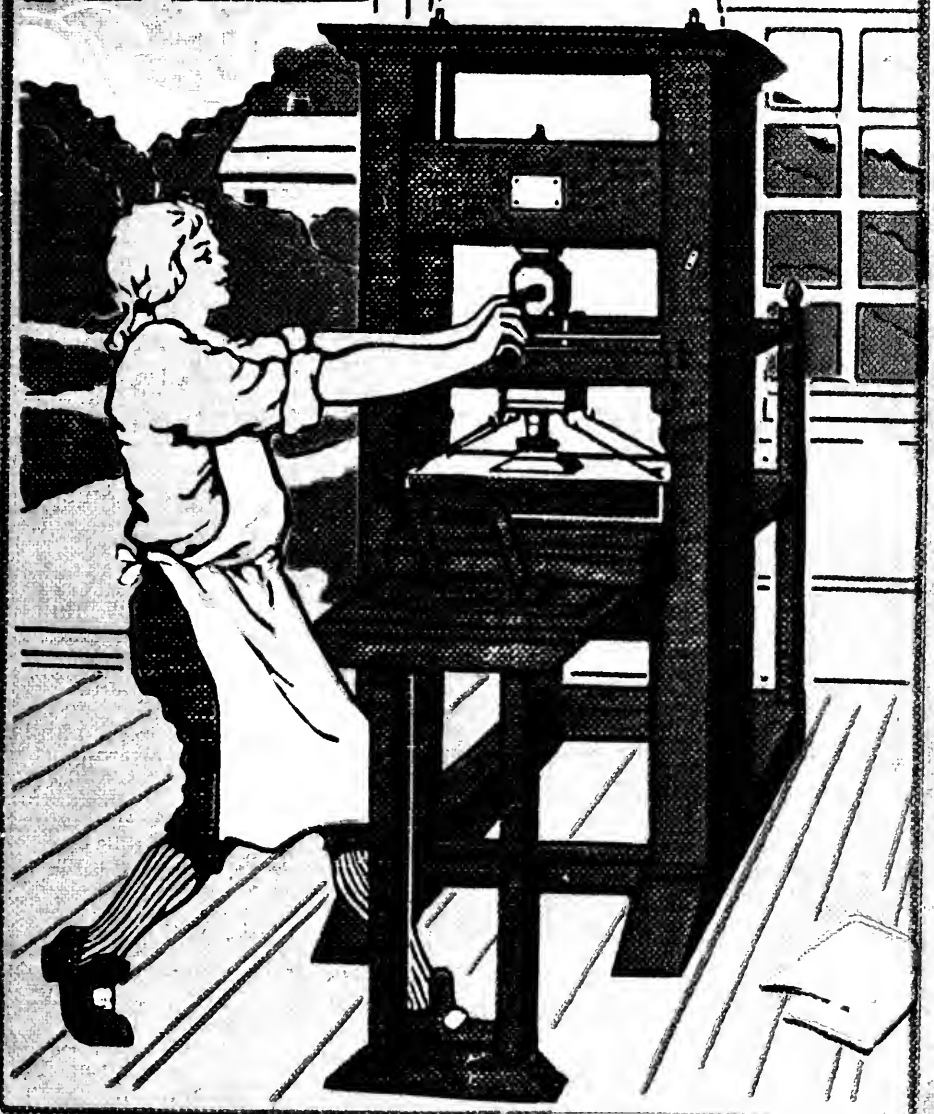
The STORY *of* YOUNG BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

WAYNE WHIPPLE



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Frontispiece.

HE SAW A YOUNG GIRL STANDING IN THE DOORWAY.

The Story of Young Benjamin Franklin

By

WAYNE WHIPPLE

Author of The Story of the American Flag, The Story of the Liberty Bell, The Story of the White House, The Story of Young George Washington, the Story of Young Abraham Lincoln, etc.

Illustrated

PHILADELPHIA

HENRY ALTEMUS COMPANY

IN UNIFORM STYLE BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE STORY OF
YOUNG GEORGE WASHINGTON

THE STORY OF
YOUNG ABRAHAM LINCOLN

THE STORY OF
YOUNG BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

THE STORY OF
YOUNG U. S. GRANT

Large 12mo Cloth, with Eight Full Page Illustrations in Color
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INTRODUCTION

"The First and Greatest American"

A great man is like a lofty mountain—you cannot take in his true grandeur except at a great distance. From a point near Pike's Peak you cannot discern how much higher the towering mountain is than the hills around it.

The same is true of Benjamin Franklin. The American Revolution developed a rare group of great men, so strong in their different ways that it was impossible at the time to distinguish the greatest. Even the first United States Congress did not appreciate Washington. Some of its members were jealous of him, and a neighbor once said: "Washington would never have been anything but a land surveyor if he had not married a wealthy widow!" With such petty notions the Congress, that should have helped and supported the commander-in-chief, hampered

and annoyed him, and was harder to cope with in some respects than the British and Hessian armies.

If it had not been for Franklin's tactful work and influence in Europe, Washington could never have gained his final victory at Yorktown nor achieved the independence of the United States. This fact is not so widely known as it should be, so "The Story of Young Benjamin Franklin" is meant to show vividly how Franklin, the great-hearted inventor, philosopher and diplomat, induced princes and people of the Old World to send men, ships and money to conquer the British armies and thus gain the grand boon of Liberty for the American Colonies.

It was by foreign nations that Franklin was first recognized as the greatest man of his time. Not only was he not appreciated in America, but he was narrowly misjudged because he was, in many respects, far in advance of his day.

While in London, a journeyman printer of nineteen, young Franklin wrote a strong liberal pamphlet setting forth what were called infidel ideas. This attracted the notice of some of the greatest minds in England. Franklin not only renounced the opinions given in this youthful

essay, which would not be taken more seriously nowadays than a thesis written by a young man in college, but he also wrote in his Autobiography that his allowing his admiring employer to print this pamphlet was one of the worst mistakes he ever made.

Franklin was so far ahead of the world in many of his ideas that even progressive America, though following him with rapid strides for nearly two centuries, has not yet caught up with him.

He did not believe in the religion taught by the ministers of his day. He complained that they seemed to lose sight of the good they ought to be doing and wasted their efforts in mere theological arguments and bitter attacks on the beliefs of fellow Christians who did not think just as they did. In this the Christian world now agrees with Franklin—that men ought to be good, and do good, and make good in their own daily living instead of theorizing and arguing about the doctrines of others. There is not one Churchman in a hundred to-day who would side with the ministers of that period against Benjamin Franklin, but the good philosopher's reputation suffers yet from the narrow notions

of the people who followed blinded leaders, in being afraid of ghosts and witches, and could not forgive Franklin for laughing at their foolish superstitions.

Because Abraham Lincoln was not a member of a religious denomination, some people have claimed that he was an irreligious man and a skeptic. But the people now recognize the fact that Lincoln lived a devout Christian life. The world to-day would see, in Benjamin Franklin, the great desire to do good to everybody. His great inventions, the stove, the lightning rod and so forth, he gave to the people, never accepting a penny for patent rights, though they, especially the stove, were so commonly used that he might have been, like King Solomon, the richest, as well as the wisest man in the world. He enjoyed knowing that the Franklin Stove was not only giving comfort but also saved fuel for the poor, and although others took advantage of his kindness by wrongfully applying for patents on his inventions, he could not bear the thought of receiving any pay from the pockets of his beloved people.

Beside his great love for everybody, Franklin was in earnest even about the forms of religion.

He counseled Tom Paine, the great skeptic of the time, not to publish his "Age of Reason," because of the harm such a book would do in the world. In the last years of his life, while a member of the convention which drafted the Constitution of the United States, Franklin made the motion that their daily deliberations should be opened with prayer. It was a Godless age. Men were influenced by French infidelity. (This is given as one reason that the name of God is not mentioned in the Constitution of the United States.) Franklin had lived many years in France, but his experiences there, instead of weakening his faith, seemed to strengthen it. His sorrow, when nearly all the members of the Constitutional Convention voted down his motion, is one of the saddest incidents in his life.

Few persons read the books that were written in America two hundred years ago. There is really but one book that has come down through the centuries, and that is Benjamin Franklin's story of his own life, told in such simple, straightforward language that it is still read by men, women and children as eagerly as if it were the latest popular novel. The great American books of Franklin's time—"The Day of

Doom," by Michael Wigglesworth, and "Magnalia Christi Americana," by the Reverend Doctor Cotton Mather—are interesting only as literary curiosities, and amusing for their pompous narrow-mindedness. But they were read and feared by the American colonists who criticized the kindly philosopher, and did not like him because he laughed at their silly superstitions.

There was one thing for which the people could not forgive Franklin—that was his sense of humor. Yet Franklin laughed them out of their narrow lives. He laughed America into thrifty habits. His humor, as well as his philosophy and many inventions, helped mightly in making the United States free and independent among the world's Great Powers. His "soft answer" turned away the wrath, even of the British ministry. His tact and kindliness, in addition to his wonderful inventions and the witty sayings of "Poor Richard," wielded so much power in France that Franklin—*le grand Americain*—set the fashions for Paris. Hats, canes, snuffboxes were named for him. He exercised the mightiest influence over the civilized world of any human being of his time.

In spite of the fact that he was followed and

adored like a demigod, Franklin was too modest to realize the mighty influence he was exerting. "In that elder day to be an *American* was greater than to be a king," in the eyes of Continental Europe, and that was all the simple, loving, merry heart of Benjamin Franklin desired. He was the Father of the American Revolution, and, because he was a generation older than Washington and most of the men who achieved American Independence, the Grandfather of His Country.

It is because of the fascinating interest of Franklin's Autobiography that much of the best of it is quoted in the pages of "The Story of Young Benjamin Franklin," just as would have been done in the stories of "Young George Washington" and "Young Abraham Lincoln," if they had written out the heart story of their younger days as Franklin did. Clearly as he saw into the future, the kind old philosopher had no idea that he was writing the greatest autobiography ever produced, or that not only the *library in Philadelphia which he himself founded,* but many other great libraries, as well, in America would have to keep scores of copies of his wonderful little book on their shelves to

supply the demand of the reading public. But he never finished his life story. Many writers, by patient and continued search, have developed more and more that is interesting about him—many incidents having been brought to light within the past few years. The best of all these data have been gathered from sources innumerable and placed in attractive array in this book to give to Young America to-day a fair and grateful estimate of the man who was known as the greatest man of his time, and has come to be considered, in many-sidedness, in view of all he did for the world and achieved for his own country—"the first and greatest American."

WAYNE WHIPPLE.

THE STORY OF YOUNG BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

CHAPTER I

A Big Family and its Youngest Boy.

In a small unpainted wooden house on Milk Street, nearly opposite the first little meeting-house of the Old South Church, Boston, lived Josiah Franklin. He was a good and wise man, much respected, although he was poor and had to work hard, with the help of his wife and children, to feed and clothe his large and growing family.

Josiah Franklin was a well-educated man for those times. He had learned the dyer's trade in old England, but he found, after coming to America, that the people cared more to have their clothing warm and wear well than they did for the color or style of it. In fact, many who

lived in Boston then thought it wicked to wear any bright colors. For a man or woman to care for beauty in dress was a sign of sinful vanity, which made pious people shake their heads.

So good Josiah Franklin had to find some other way to make a living than by dyeing. Looking about for work that was not being done by too many others, he decided that every family must have soap and candles. Though this work was not pleasant, because of the odor of boiling soapgrease and melting tallow, it was honest and useful, helping the neighbors keep clean and furnishing them with the means of lighting their homes—long before oil, gas and electricity were discovered. And the neighbors realized that some one must do these disagreeable duties, or they would all have to make soap and candles for themselves.

Although Boston was, at this time, the largest town in America, everybody knew everybody. The neighbors knew that Abiah was Josiah Franklin's second wife and that she was a daughter of Peter Folger, the Quaker poet of Nantucket, who was also familiar with several languages and turned his knowledge to good ac-

count as interpreter for the surrounding tribes of Indians.

The neighbors knew, also, that two of the first Mrs. Franklin's younger sons had gone away so far that she never saw them again. James, one of these, was in England learning the printer's trade; and the other, young Josiah, had run away to sea. But Peter and John, the two older sons, stayed by to help their father carry on his business.

In those early days the women had to work very hard, and even the little children had their work to do. This was true of the Franklin family. But it was pleasant at night, while the mother and children were resting and knitting and doing easy work by the light of the fire, to hear Father Josiah play again the psalm tunes on his violin with which he sometimes led the singing in meeting, and the songs they used to sing in Old England. And the neighbors, hearing the familiar strains that carried them, in memory, back "home" as they called it, floating on the evening air from the little brown house, felt more than paid for the few unpleasant whiffs that came out through the opened door during the day.

Into this already large and interesting family another child was born on a cold day, January 6, 1706 (January 17, 1706, New Style.[1]) The neighbors very soon heard about the new arrival, for the father insisted on taking the baby boy, through the snow, right across the street, as it was Sunday, to have him baptized.

The record of this baptism, more than two hundred years ago, is still shown to visitors in the Old South Meetinghouse, in the quaint, half-printed writing of the minister, Willard:

"Benjamin, son of Josiah Franklin and Abiah, his wife."

Benjamin was thus named for his uncle, Benjamin Franklin, then living in England. This uncle was a great reader and a writer of many rhymed verses. When Uncle Benjamin heard of his namesake across the sea, he wrote the baby boy a long piece which he called an "acrostick," because it not only rhymed at the end but the letters beginning the lines, when read downward, spelled the name of both uncle and nephew:

[1] The New Style Calendar was adopted in Great Britain, 1752.

"B-E-N-J-A-M-I-N F-R-A-N-K-L-I-N"

"*B*e to thy parents an obedient son;
*E*ach day let duty constantly be done;
*N*ever give way to sloth, or lust, or pride,
*I*f freed you'd be from thousand ills beside;
*A*bove all ills be sure avoid the shelf;
*M*an's danger lies in Satan, sin, and self.
*I*n virtue, learning, wisdom, progress make;
*N*e'er shrink at suffering for thy Saviour's sake.

"*F*raud and all falsehood in thy dealings flee,
*R*eligious always in thy dealings be;
*A*dore the Maker of thy inward part;
*N*ow's the accepted time, give Him thy heart;
*K*eep a good conscience, 'tis a constant friend;
*L*ike judge and witness this thy acts attend.
*I*n heart with bended knee, alone adore
*N*one but the Three in One for evermore."

This was a strange way to write to a baby, but Uncle Benjamin knew very well that his acrostic would be preserved as a family treasure (even a letter in those days was a rare thing) to be shown to the little boy when he grew old enough to read it himself.

When Ben was four years old, some one gave him a trumpet and drum, and he made a great din, marching in and out of the house, tooting the trumpet and beating the drum. When Uncle Benjamin, over in England, heard of this, he wrote for his small nephew some more verses describing the horrors of war, and warning the little boy never to be a soldier.

Uncle Benjamin, like his brother Josiah, was a pious man. He wrote to say that he wished his namesake might become a minister, for the uncle had always been interested in preaching, though he had never been able himself to take the course of study necessary to become a minister. He had made up a system of shorthand of his own and had taken down hundreds of sermons while they were being preached, and he offered all these to help Ben if he would study for the ministry.

Josiah Franklin would have been glad to give

the tithe of his sons to the Lord, as he expressed it, for Benjamin was his tenth son, and fifteenth child, and five daughters had been born to him. But when Ben grew old enough to decide such matters for himself, he did not wish to be a clergyman, and Father Josiah and Uncle Benjamin had to give up their cherished plan for him. Wide and high as Benjamin Franklin's influence might have been, if he had become a minister like Dr. Cotton Mather, who was the greatest preacher in America then, it would not have been one-tenth as great as Dr. Benjamin Franklin's, for he came to be the greatest and most influential man in the world, by faithfully following his own leading, working, studying, reading and doing well everything that he had to do.

Benjamin Franklin once said that he could not remember when he could not read. There were no children's books or stories in those days, excepting the best of all the stories found in the Bible. Boys were taught to read from the sacred book. Uncle Benjamin's poetry was very different from the nursery jingles and rhymes that amuse little children nowadays, but the Franklin family had a neighbor whose melodies

were to become nearly as well known as anything that Benjamin ever wrote. Mother Goose, as she was called, was living in Boston, making up and singing funny songs to her own grandchild while Ben Franklin was still a little child. Her real name was Mrs. Isaac Vergoose, and her daughter, Elizabeth, married Thomas Fleet, a printer who kept a shop in Pudding Lane. It is claimed by several good people that Printer Fleet wrote down the quaint rhymes that his mother-in-law sang to his child—her grandchild—without Grandmother Vergoose's knowledge, and published them as "Mother Goose Melodies" in a little paper book, in 1719, which he sold at "two coppers" each.

It is true that there was an imaginary Mother Goose who wrote long stories and songs in French centuries before Franklin's time, and the two Mother Gooses may have been confused since then, but there can be no doubt that Grandmother Goose did sing some of the songs to Thomas Fleet's child that are familiar to children all over the world now in "Mother Goose Melodies."

Before Baby Ben could remember, his father moved from the little house on Milk Street to

one almost as small on the corner of Hanover and Union Streets, where he hung out over the front door two blue balls about the size of a man's head, as a sign to show that he sold blueing as well as candles, soap and other articles for washing and housekeeping.

Benjamin once wrote that he could remember when thirteen Franklin children sat around the family table. He did not even mention the names of all his brothers and sisters. His youngest sister Jane, or Jenny, was the seventh daughter and the seventeenth and youngest child, born when Benjamin was six years old. He often wrote to her and went to Boston to see her after all the others had gone. Jenny was the only one of seventeen children who lived longer than her famous brother.

Uncle Benjamin soon came across the ocean to live with his brother Josiah and help train and educate his little namesake nephew, though he had a son, Samuel, who was then learning the cutlery, or the knife and tool trade, and afterward set up business in Boston.

While Ben was still a young boy, his runaway brother, Josiah, came home one day and surprised them all, for they had not heard from him

for so long they had given him up for dead. He was himself surprised, for he found his own mother had died while he was away, and there was a new mother in her place with several more children in the family, of whom little Ben was the youngest boy. Of course, Josiah had plenty of stories to tell about pirates and of his own hardships and adventures which all boys—and Benjamin Franklin was a real boy—delight to hear. Ben had, like many other boys, a great longing for "a life on the ocean wave," even after Josiah went away again and was never heard of afterward.

It must not be supposed that because there were no books for boys and girls, nor baseball, nor moving-picture shows that the children had no sports or excitements. In those days the children had active games requiring strength, skill and heroism, and as for excitement, there were Indians around Boston, who sometimes went on the war-path, and some of the children were stolen by savages and had thrilling experiences. There had recently been Indian massacres, not far from Boston, that made wonderfully good stories to tell at night by the great firesides; and even the best educated people—

ministers and doctors—believed in ghosts and witches.

And bears! If children behaved with disrespect toward their elders, they were warned of the fate of the naughty children in the Old Testament, who jeered at the prophet, Elisha, and bears came out of the wood and devoured them. In one of the earliest newspapers ever printed in Boston was the following item, which must have carried terror to many little hearts when they heard it read:

"It is thought that not less than twenty Bears have been killed in a week's time within two miles of Boston. Two have been killed below the Castle, as they were swimming from one island to another, and one attempted to board a boat out in the bay, but the men defended themselves with a boathook and oars and then killed her.

"On Tuesday last two were killed at Dorchester (now part of Boston), one of which weighed 60 pounds a quarter.

"We hear from Providence that bears appear to be very thick in those parts."

So the Franklins, old and young, had plenty of work to do in the day time and enough to

think and talk about at table and during the long winter evenings before the great, open fireplace with its big blazing backlog.

As for the witches and ghosts of the people's frightened imaginations, no one ever did more than Benjamin Franklin to rid the minds of the people of such foolish ideas. But many persons did not like him on this account. They thought he was a wicked man because he was too sensible to believe in such things and laughed at their superstitions.

Of his early life in the little Boston home, Benjamin Franklin, when he was an old man, wrote to his only living sister, Jenny:

"It was indeed a lowly dwelling that we were brought up in, but we were fed plentifully, made comfortable with fire and clothing, had seldom any contention among us, but all was harmonious, especially between the heads (parents), and they were universally respected—and the most of the family in good reputation—this is still happier than multitudes enjoy."

CHAPTER II

Learning and Earning

It was a noisy, overcrowded house, but it was a happy home. As soon as they were old enough the children all had to work, the girls as well as the boys, to help provide food and clothing for the large household. There were no ready-made clothing stores where young Ben Franklin could be taken to buy him a suit of clothes. The women had to spin wool and flax and weave the cloth of which the men's and boys' winter and summer suits were made, besides making up the cloth into clothing.

The first story Benjamin Franklin related of his boyhood was told by way of illustration. On a holiday in Boston town, when he was about seven years old, some one gave Ben a handful of pennies, probably to see whether he would save or spend them.

The little fellow put the precious coins in his

pocket and started out, feeling very rich. In the street he met a boy with a whistle, which must have been a poor affair, but its shrill notes were music to the ear of the little boy with the pennies. Ben wanted that whistle. He could have bought a better toy at the store for less than half the money, but he could not wait—he wanted that whistle *right away!* He offered the boy all his pennies for it, and of course the bargain was made at once.

Ben came home, proud of his whistle, and its piercing notes were added to the other noises in the small house filled with growing children. The boy and his whistle soon became a nuisance. They asked him where he got it, and he told them. They all laughed when they found that he had paid all his money for one second-hand whistle. "You cheated yourself," they said, "for you paid that boy several times as much as the thing is worth!" They made so much fun of him about his bad bargain that poor little Ben lost all the pride and pleasure he took in his purchase. More than sixty years after this Dr. Franklin wrote about his first bargain: "I cried with vexation; and my reflections gave me more chagrin than the whistle gave me pleasure."

It was a bitter lesson for the little boy, and he always remembered it, for he related, long afterward, that the experience had taught him this: "When I was tempted to buy some unnecessary thing, I said to myself, 'Don't pay too much for the whistle,' and so saved my money."

Ben was a sturdy little fellow, good natured, observing and thoughtful. It is told of him that he got up a new game for his comrades to play —running past a shop window and each boy telling all he saw in one quick glance. It is said that Benjamin always beat at that game and learned to notice so quickly that he "could see more in crossing the street than most men could in crossing the ocean."

In his account of his life Franklin tells of an escapade in which he got a number of playmates into trouble. Here is his own story of the affair:

"Living near the water, I was much in and about it and learned to swim well, and to manage boats; and when in a boat or canoe with other boys, I was commonly allowed to govern, especially in any case of difficulty; and upon other occasions I was generally a leader among the boys and sometimes led them into scrapes, of which I will mention one instance as it shows an

early projecting public spirit, though not then justly conducted.

"There was a salt marsh that bounded part of the mill pond, in the edge of which, at high water, we used to stand and fish for minnows. By much trampling we had made it a mere quagmire (mudhole). My proposal was to build a wharf there fit for us to stand upon, and I showed my comrades a large heap of stones which were intended for a house near the marsh, and which would very well suit our purpose.

"Accordingly, in the evening, when the workmen were gone, I assembled a number of my playfellows, and working with them diligently, like so many emmets (ants), sometimes two or three to a stone, we brought them all away and built our little wharf. The next morning the workmen were surprised at missing the stones, which were found in our wharf. Inquiry was made after the removers: we were discovered and complained of; several of us were corrected by our fathers; and though I pleaded the usefulness of the work, mine convinced me that nothing was useful which was not honest."

When he was eight years old Benjamin was sent to a grammar school, and he passed all the

other boys in his studies and was promoted twice during the year, so he was sent to another school to learn writing and arithmetic. Of this school Franklin said: "I learned fair writing pretty soon; but I failed in arithmetic, and made no progress in it."

At ten Ben was taken out of school, so that, though he attended a little longer than young Lincoln, he was through school at the age at which the Lincoln lad began. Yet Benjamin Franklin became one of the greatest and best educated men in the world's history, because he kept on in the school of observation and experience all his life long.

When Ben was only ten his father needed his help in his soap and candle making. The boy began at once to show his genius for saving time and labor in his work. It is said that he carried his labor-saving ideas so far that, when he saw his father salting down a barrel of pork for future use, he asked:

"Why don't you ask the blessing on that pork now, all at once, and save the time you spend every time we eat some of it?"

No doubt pious Father Franklin was shocked at the small boy's suggestion.

Benjamin's first work was cutting wicks for the candles, and learning to dip them into the hot tallow and raise them up to cool; then to dip them again, so more hot grease would stick to them, then lift them out to cool again, until enough tallow had adhered to the long wicks to make them look like icicles. Sometimes they poured the hot tallow into candle moulds, in which Ben had to draw the wicks.

This was hard and confining work for a young lad, and Josiah Franklin saw that Benjamin did not like the trade. Besides, the older sons of that day thought it proper to treat their younger brothers roughly, and often harshly. "Children should be seen and not heard," and a boy, to learn a trade, was bound by law to a master until he was twenty-one, or for a term of years named in his "indenture," the legal document drawn up for that purpose. An apprentice boy was often treated unkindly. His indenture made him almost a slave, and if his master was cruel his lot was harder to bear than that of many of the negroes who lived in actual slavery.

So the father tried to find another trade which his youngest boy would like better. One reason for this was that Ben had the same longing for

the sea that the Virginia lad, George Washington, had about twenty-five years later, while passing his restless boyhood on the banks of the Rappahannock and Potomac Rivers. Josiah Franklin took his youngest son out walking to "see joiners, bricklayers, turners, braziers, etc., at work," searching for something to please the boy. They finally decided to apprentice Ben to Uncle Benjamin's son, Samuel, who was a cutler, or maker of knives and other edged tools, but the cutler expected Uncle Josiah to pay a fee for the privilege of letting the boy work nine years for nothing until he was twenty-one.

Benjamin's father did not have the money (probably one hundred dollars) to spare for an apprentice fee. So he decided to indenture the lad to his half-brother, James, a young man ten years older than Ben, to learn the printer's trade. Whatever Benjamin thought of his brother, he must have liked the work. Late in life he signed himself "Benjamin Franklin, Printer."

Franklin once wrote to his son:

"From a child I was fond of reading, and all the little money that came into my hands was ever laid out in books. This bookish inclination

determined my father to make me a printer, though he already had one son in that profession. In 1717 my brother James returned from England with a press and letters (type) to set up his business in Boston. I liked it much better than that of my father, but still had a hankering for the sea."

Benjamin knew what he had to expect as an apprentice, for aside from the ordinary hardships of a printer's "devil," as they call the boy in a printing office, his brother was not easy to get along with. But the lad was willing and ingenious, and began at once to be a great help to his brother. If James Franklin had shown his appreciation of this, matters might have gone more smoothly. But, instead of being properly pleased with the bright and useful things his apprentice brother did, the man was inclined to be fault-finding and unreasonable. Disputes arose between them which their father was called upon to "judge," and he generally decided in favor of his youngest son. This may have made Benjamin conceited and James jealous.

While doing printer's errands Ben made the acquaintance of several booksellers' apprentices who let him take books home to read. This

was a great risk. So eager was the Franklin boy to learn that he often sat up nearly all night to finish a book which was to be returned in time to be delivered to a customer next morning. If anything had happened to the precious volume they had lent without leave, the bookstore boys would have been punished, for, as they were "bound out" to the booksellers, they could not be discharged.

But they all knew Ben Franklin would hold himself responsible, and he was so good-natured and witty that they liked him too well to refuse to do him a kindness. It is quite likely that the proprietors of the bookshops knew what was going on, and, seeing great promise in a boy so eager to learn, decided not to interfere.

Though Franklin was not able to go to school after he was ten, he became the greatest scientist and philosopher of his time. He became familiar with Latin and learned to speak French well enough to represent the United States at the court of France where he was able, as a diplomat and statesman, to do nearly as much as Washington did for his struggling country.

Often men who have not been able to go through college think they have had no chance

in life. They lose sight of the fact that the most successful men have never had even high-school advantages. Much is said and written about "self-made men." Every man who really amounts to anything in life is "self-made."

A college graduate may be and remain stupid and ignorant, while another without much schooling may become, as Benjamin Franklin became, one of the best educated men of his day. Schools are a great help, if rightly used, toward true success in life. They are necessary, in fact, though not all-important—since determined boys like Franklin, Washington and Lincoln *schooled themselves* and became great men. This is not because they lived so long ago, for many men of the present day have "made" themselves in the sense that "every man is the architect of his own fortune.

The books that young Benjamin borrowed and sat up nights to read were not fiction. The first book he ever bought for himself was "The Pilgrim's Progress." Most of the books he read with such eagerness would not be considered fascinating by young people nowadays. Ben Franklin did not read for amusement or "merely to pass away the time," but because he wanted

to learn and be a benefit to others. "Look out for number one" is a selfish motto. No boy can become a really great man unless he thinks of others before himself.

CHAPTER III

Apprentice and Student

Benjamin had begun to make rhymes when he was only seven years old, in writing to his Uncle Benjamin. In those days the story of a great event, like a shipwreck or a murder, was told in a long, rhymed narrative called a ballad. These ballads were as common as popular songs are to-day. So Benjamin, to increase his brother's business, wrote two ballads, one about a shipwreck in Boston harbor, and the other describing the capture and hanging of a pirate. After Ben had written these he set them up, or "composed" them in type, and sold them through the streets of Boston town. Franklin himself tells of his experience as a "ballad-monger:"

"I now took a fancy to poetry, and made some little pieces; my brother, thinking it might turn to account, encouraged me, and put me on composing ballads.

"One was called 'The Lighthouse Tragedy,' and contained an account of the drowning of Captain Worthilake, with his two daughters; the other was a sailor's song on the taking of 'Teach' (or Blackbeard), the pirate. They were wretched stuff, in the Grub Street ballad style; and when they were printed he sent me about the town to sell them. The first sold wonderfully, the event being recent, having made a great noise. This flattered my vanity; but my father discouraged me by ridiculing my performances, and telling me verse-makers were generally beggars. So I escaped being a poet, most probably a very bad one."

Here are the opening lines of Ben's ballad on Blackbeard, the pirate, which Franklin late in life, called "wretched stuff:"

"Will you hear of a bloody Battle,
Lately fought upon the Seas,
It will make your Ears to rattle,
And your Admiration cease;

THE FIRST SOLD WONDERFULLY.

Have you heard of Teach, the Rover,
And his Knavery on the Main;
How of Gold he was a Lover,
How he lov'd all ill-got Gain?"

Josiah Franklin proved himself to be a man of sound sense. His advice to his son appears always to have been wise. Here is another story told in Franklin's life-history:

"There was another bookish lad in town, John Collins by name, with whom I was intimately acquainted. We sometimes disputed (debated) and very fond we were of argument and very desirous of confuting (beating) one another, which disputatious (arguing) turn, by the way, is apt to become a very bad habit, making people often extremely disagreeable in company by the contradiction that is necessary to bring it into practice; and thence, besides souring and spoiling the conversation, is productive of disgusts, and perhaps enmities where you may have occasion for friendship. I had caught it (the habit of arguing) by reading my father's books of dispute about religion. Persons of good sense, I have since observed, seldom fall into it (this habit) except lawyers, university men, and men of all sorts that have been bred at Edinburgh.

"A question was once, somehow or other, started between Collins and me, of the propriety of educating the female sex in learning, and their abilities for study. He was of opinion that it was improper, and that they (women) were unequal to it.

"I took the contrary side, perhaps a little for dispute's sake. He was naturally more eloquent, had a ready plenty of words; and sometimes, as I thought, bore me down more by his fluency than by the strength of his reasons.

"As we parted without settling the point, and were not to see each other again for some time, I sat down to put my arguments in writing, which I copied fair and sent to him. He answered and I replied. Three or four letters of a side had passed when my father happened to find my papers and read them. Without entering into the discussion, he took occasion to talk to me about the manner of my writing and observed that though I had the advantage of my antagonist in correct spelling and pointing (punctuation) (which I owed to the printing house), I fell far short in elegance of expression. I saw the justice of his remarks, and thence grew more attentive to the manner in my writing, and

determined to endeavor at improvement."

The idea of two mere boys "disputing" about the capabilities of the "female sex" seems rather ludicrous now. In common conversation a lady was often referred to as a "female." To-day there is no more respectful word for her than "woman."

Franklin went on to describe his efforts at expressing himself well:

"About this time I met with an odd volume of the 'Spectator' (a magazine containing a collection of essays and discussions edited by Joseph Addison, known as the writer of most elegant English). I bought it and read it over and over, and was much delighted with it. I thought the writing excellent, and wished, if possible, to imitate it.

"With this view I took some of the papers (articles) and, making short hints of the sentiment in each sentence, laid them by a few days, and then, without looking at the book tried to complete the papers again, by expressing each hinted sentiment at length, and as fully as it had been expressed before, in any suitable words that should come to hand. Then I compared my 'Spectator' with the original, dis-

covered some of my faults and corrected them.

"But I found I wanted a stock of words, or a readiness in recollecting and using them, which I thought I should have acquired before that time if I had gone on making verses; since the continual occasion for words of the same import (meaning), but of different length, to suit the measure, or of different sound for the rhyme, would have laid me under constant necessity of searching for variety, and also have tended to fix that variety in my mind, and make me master of it.

"Therefore I took some of the tales and turned them into verse; and, after a time, when I had pretty well forgotten the prose, turned them back again. I also sometimes jumbled my collections of hints into confusion, and after some weeks endeavored to reduce them into the best order, before I began to form the full sentences and complete the paper.

"This was to teach me method in the arrangement of thoughts. By comparing my work afterwards with the original, I discovered many faults and amended them; but I sometimes had the pleasure of fancying that, in certain particulars of small import, I had been lucky

enough to improve the method or the language, and this encouraged me to think I might possibly in time come to be a tolerable English writer, of which I was extremely ambitious.

"My time for these exercises and for reading was at night after work, or before it began in the morning."

When Ben was fifteen or sixteen he happened to read a book against the eating of meat. This made a deep impression on the lad's mind. His brother, being unmarried, boarded, with his apprentices, in another family. Ben's eating only vegetable food made trouble in their boarding-house, and James scolded the boy for being so peculiar. Benjamin stuck to his vegetable diet and told his brother he would board himself for half the money James was then paying for him. His brother at once agreed to this, and out of that half, young Ben saved half the amount James paid him. Of this Franklin afterward wrote:

"This was an additional fund for buying books. But I had another advantage in it. My brother and the rest going from the printing house to their meals, I remained there alone, and, despatching presently my light repast,

which was often no more than a biscuit or a slice of bread, a handful of raisins or a tart from the pastry cook's, and a glass of water, I had the rest of the time till their return for study, in which I made the greatest progress, from that greater clearness of head and quicker apprehension which usually attend temperance in eating and drinking."

About this time, also, something happened which made the printer's apprentice ashamed of his ignorance of arithmetic, in which he had "failed twice in learning when at school" six or eight years before. So he got a text-book and studied arithmetic by himself, mastering the book "with great ease."

This "printer's devil" also read "The Art of Thinking" and Locke's "Essay on Human Understanding," Xenophon's "Memorabilia of Socrates," besides the philosophical works of Shaftesbury and Collins. His fellow-apprentices must have thought Ben Franklin was a queer sort of fellow, always poring over books on subjects which they could not understand. No doubt they could not see any sense in his staying alone in the printer's shop eating crackers, drinking water and reading dry essays and dis-

cussions while they were having a good dinner with their employer. But no one knows now who those apprentices were, and no one cares, except for the mere fact they worked in the shop with Benjamin Franklin.

By studying whenever he could, and saving half the small sum he was allowed for board, the young apprentice was putting into practice one of his own later maxims—*"Empty thy purse into thy head."*

CHAPTER IV

The Boy Contributor, Editor and Publisher

"In a little time," wrote Franklin, "I made a great proficiency in the business, and became a useful hand to my brother." The lad knew this well enough, though his brother did not tell him he was "a useful hand." Parents did not encourage their children in well doing in those days, and tradesmen believed in "keeping down" their apprentices.

After Benjamin had been with his brother

three years, James Franklin decided to start a newspaper. They named it the "New England Courant." Some people shook their heads, for there were already three in the United States—the "News Letter," and the "Gazette," published in Boston, and one, the "American Weekly Mercury," in Philadelphia. Those wise men thought the country could never support four weekly newspapers! A daily paper had not yet been thought of. James Franklin's "Courant" was the first sensational or "yellow" journal, in America at least. The freedom of the press, as it is believed in to-day, would have seemed a terrible thing to those in authority.

Franklin went on about his brother's newspaper:

"I remember his being dissuaded by some friends of his from the undertaking. He went on, however, and after having worked in composing (setting) the types and printing off the sheets, I was employed to carry the papers through the streets to the customers.

"He (James) had some ingenious (clever or smart) men among his friends who amused themselves by writing little pieces for the paper, which gained it credit and made it more in de-

mand, and these gentlemen often visited us. Hearing their conversations, and their accounts of the approbation their papers (articles) were received with, I was excited to try my hand among them; but, being still a boy, and suspecting that my brother would object to printing anything of mine in his paper if he knew it to be mine, I contrived to disguise my hand, and, writing an anonymous paper, I put it in at night under the door of the printing house. It was found in the morning and communicated to his writing friends when they called in as usual. They read it, commented on it in my hearing, and I had the exquisite pleasure of finding it met with their approbation, and that, in different guesses at the author, none were named but men of some character among us for learning and ingenuity. I suppose now that I was very lucky in my judges, and that perhaps they were not really so very good ones as I then esteemed them.

"Encouraged, however, by this, I wrote and conveyed in the same way to the press several more papers which were equally approved."

Benjamin Franklin was a strange office boy. Though he set much of the type and then ran the sheets off on the hand press, and after printing

the newspapers he went through the streets loaded with great bundles, delivering them to the customers, he could not content himself without writing "pieces" which he himself would have to put in type and run off on the press.

These contributions of a sixteen-year-old "printer's devil" would be interesting reading to-day. It is believed that the first "piece" was against the pretensions of certain Harvard students and graduates. Even at that early age Benjamin Franklin could see the foolishness of assuming that college graduates were the only educated men. No doubt there was a little unconscious envy in the thoughts of the youth who was so hungry for learning yet was too poor to go to college. Later in life, Benjamin Franklin learned to think differently about college advantages, and became one of the founders of one of the greatest institutions of learning in America —the University of Pennsylvania—and though he had been denied college privileges, he received the highest degrees and honors from colleges and universities in America and Europe.

The name Benjamin signed to these pieces was "Silence Dogood." The following acknowl-

edgment, which appeared in the "Courant," evidently written by his brother, must have made him chuckle over his secret:

> "As the favour of Mrs. Dogood's Correspondence is acknowledged by the Publisher of this Paper, lest any of her letters should miscarry, he desires they may be deliver'd at his Printing-Office, or at the Blue Balls in Union street, and no questions will be ask'd of the Bearer."

"The Blue Balls" was the sign before the door of Josiah Franklin's soap and candle shop.

"Mrs. Dogood" replied that "she"

> "intends once a Fortnight to present them, by the Help of this Paper, with a short Epistle, which I presume will add somewhat to their Entertainment."

Ben was as good as his word, for he wrote fourteen letters as the "Widow Dogood," discussing, in a free and gossipy way, college education, the training of women, widows, hypocrites, match-making, religion, pride, drinking, and other things a lad of sixteen ought not to know much about. In his "Autobiography" he wrote:

"I kept my secret till my small fund of sense for such performances was pretty well exhausted, and I then discovered (revealed) it, when I began to be considered a little more by my brother's acquaintance, and in a manner that did not quite please him, as he thought, probably with reason, that it tended to make me too vain.

"And perhaps this might be one occasion of the differences we began to have about this time. Though a brother, he considered himself as my master, and me as his apprentice, and accordingly expected the same services from me as he would from another, while I thought he demeaned me too much in some he required of me who, from a brother, expected more indulgence. Our disputes were often brought before our father, and I fancy I was generally in the right, or else a better pleader, because the judgment was generally in my favor."

James Franklin, a naturally suspicious, harsh-tempered young man, was now jealous of his half-brother ten years younger than himself. When Ben did the least wrong James treated him with the three-fold severity of an older brother, a hard master, and almost like Ben's

owner, as if the boy were a slave. Often he was cruel and unreasonable and beat the boy when he did not deserve it, which Franklin wrote, long afterward, he "took extremely amiss," and began to look about for some way to break the contract which bound the lad until he was twenty-one.

An unexpected opportunity came to the youth's relief. In the "New England Courant" appeared, one day, a paragraph which would not occasion any comment in these days of so-called "liberty of the press," but it aroused the righteous wrath of the authorities, because a mere man had taken upon himself to criticize their course. It reads like a mere pious reflection on the engaging of Indians in a war against Canada:

"If Almighty God will have Canada subdued without the assistance of those miserable Savages, in whom we have too much confidence, we shall be glad that there will be no sacrifices offered up to the Devil upon the occasion, God alone will have the glory."

The Great and General Court was so moved with indignation that on that very day this order was issued:

"In Council, Jan. 14, 1722.

"*Whereas,* the paper called the New England Courant, of this day's date, contains many passages in which the Holy Scriptures are perverted, and the Civil Government, Ministers and People of this Providence highly reflected on.

"*Ordered,* That William Tailer, Samuel Sewell, and Penn Townsend, Esqrs., with such of the Honourable House of Representatives shall join, be a committee to consider and report what is proper for the Court to do thereon."

James Franklin was promptly arrested, taken before the Council and severely censured, then ordered confined "in the stone jail" for a month, for libeling his superiors. Young Ben was also arrested and questioned, but that young person was too shrewd to let them trip him into saying anything against his overbearing brother, or to the damage of the business. Although they knew he was a bright lad and capable of writing skits and poking fun at those in authority, they knew also that, as an apprentice, he was bound by law not to betray his master's secrets, So, after a sharp warning, they let him go.

While it seems absurd to imprison a man for such a harmless reflection as that about hiring Indians to fight, it was only a short time before this, since Benjamin's apprenticeship began, that John Mathews, a harmless youth of nineteen, who thought it would be a clever thing to write a pamphlet and have it printed, in favor of the right of the royal house of Stuart to return to the throne of England. He did this and was beheaded at Tyburn, the place of execution in London.

And some time before this a printer, named John Gwyn, set up and printed a sort of circular brought him by another, in which was this statement: "If magistrates pervert judgment, the people are bound by the law of God to execute judgment without them, *and upon them.*"

The poor printer told the judge that he meant no harm. The offensive words were not his. He had printed them for some one else, as he was a poor man with a wife and children to feed. That terrible "justice," named Hyde, just to please the king, as he thought, ordered poor Gwyn dragged to the place of execution on a hurdle; hanged by the neck till he was almost strangled, then cut down and cut up in pieces, while still

alive, then, after tortures too cruel and horrible to print, killed by having his head cut off. His head, arms and legs were then disposed of "at the pleasure of the king's majesty!"

During his brother's imprisonment, Ben, in spite of these warnings, "made bold to give the rulers some rubs," in the paper. This, he said, gave his imprisoned brother a good deal of satisfaction. Here is a "rub" which showed that the boy already had some skill in dealing with the sort of sarcasm which could not be answered so easily as James's Scriptural criticisms. Pirates had been sighted off Block Island, and the authorities were so slow in following them that Ben indulged in this quiet drive at such a cowardly delay, in a letter purporting to have been sent to the "Courant" from Newport:

"We are advised from Boston that the government of Massachusetts are fitting out a ship to go after the pirates, to be commanded by Peter Papillon, and *'tis thought he will sail some time this month, wind and weather permitting.*"

While James was in prison, the colonial House of Representatives, agreeing with the Council, adopted the following report of the committee which had been appointed to decide what should

be done with the too sensational "Courant."

"That James Franklin, the printer and publisher thereof, be strictly forbidden by this Court to print or publish the 'New England Courant,' or any other pamphlet or paper of the like nature, except it be first supervised by the Secretary of this Province; and the Justices of his Majesty's Sessions of the Peace for the County of Suffolk, at their next adjournment, be directed to take sufficient bonds of the said Franklin for twelve months' time."

It was plucky work for a boy of sixteen to edit and publish a newspaper, and make such a sturdy fight for the liberty of the press in America. He was loyal to the brother who had abused him and treated him meanly.

That month in jail was enough for Brother James. He knew that men had suffered worse things than imprisonment for printing statements against those in authority. Editors and publishers had had their ears slitted like cattle's, or had been whipped through the streets—not because the things they had published were untrue, but because the rulers had the power to make the editors suffer for "speaking evil of magistrates." Franklin himself wrote that such

unfair treatment as this had developed within him a keen hatred of unjust authority as that of England came to be—against the American colonies.

When they voted that the "New England Courant" should be published no longer by *James* Franklin, the members of the House thought they had put a stop to that troublesome paper. Franklin himself tells what happened:

"There was a consultation held in our printing house among his (James Franklin's) friends, what he should do in this case. Some proposed to evade the order by changing the name of the paper; but my brother, seeing inconvenience in that, it was finally concluded on as a better way, to let it be printed for the future under the name of BENJAMIN FRANKLIN; and to avoid the censure of the Assembly, that might fall on him as still printing it by his apprentice, the contrivance was that my old indenture should be returned to me, with a full discharge on the back of it, to be shown on occasion, but to secure to him the benefit of my services, I was to sign new indentures for the remainder of the term, which were to be kept private. A very

flimsy scheme it was; however, it was immediately executed, and the paper went on accordingly, under my name for several months.

"At length, a fresh difference arising between my brother and me, I took upon me to assert my freedom, presuming that he would not venture to produce the new indentures. It was not fair in me to take this advantage, and this I therefore reckon one of the first errata (mistakes) of my life; but the unfairness of it weighed little with me, when under the impressions of resentment for the blows his passion too often urged him to bestow upon me, though he was otherwise not an ill-natured man; perhaps I was too saucy and provoking."

CHAPTER V

Running Away from Home

James Franklin complained of his brother to their father, who did not take Benjamin's part this time, because the younger son, though he

had good grounds for complaint, was clearly in the wrong. The brothers had had their last open quarrel. Ben declared he would not work for his brother any longer, so James, to prevent his finding employment anywhere else in Boston, went round calling on all the other printers and warning them against hiring his runaway apprentice. There was nothing for Ben to do but go back to his brother and "eat humble pie," or run away to New York, the nearest place where there were printers with whom he might find work.

James Franklin now thought he had fixed it so Ben would have to work for him four years longer, for the youth was now seventeen. If Benjamin had left Boston publicly, his father, brother or an officer of the law could have prevented it. Runaway apprentices were arrested and returned, like runaway slaves, to their masters. Ben knew this only too well, for the newspapers of that day contained many notices of apprentices who had broken their bonds and deserted their employers.

Here is an advertisement Benjamin's father had inserted in the "Courant" within a few months, concerning an apprentice who had run

away from the evil-smelling soap-and-candle business which Ben himself had disliked so much:

"Ran away from his Master, Mr. Josiah Franklin, of Boston, Tallow-Chandler, on the first of this instant July, an Irish Man-servant, named William Tinsley about 20 Years of Age, of a middle Stature, black Hair, lately cut off, somewhat fresh-coloured Countenance, a large lower lip, of a mean Aspect, large Legs, and heavy in his Going.

"He had on, when he went away, a felt Hat, a white knit Cap, striped with red and blue, white Shirt, and neck-cloth, a brown coloured-Jacket, almost new, a frieze Coat, of a dark Colour, grey yarn Stockings, leather Breeches, trimmed with black, and round to'd Shoes.

"Whoever shall apprehend the said runaway Servant, and him safely convey to his above said Master, at *the Blue Balls* in Union street, Boston, shall have forty Shillings Reward, and all necessary Charges paid."

As this notice appeared three successive weeks in the "Courant," it is safe to infer that the apprentice "of a mean aspect" was not "apprehended."

The lad thought it all over. He realized that, besides having the ill-will of his brother, he was in bad odor with the authorities because of the "rubs" he had put into the "Courant" during his brother's imprisonment, and afterward while that paper was published under his own name. He knew well enough that if he got into any trouble he could expect no consideration from "the powers" in Boston.

So he began to plan his escape. He sold some of his precious books to raise a little ready money. His friend Collins, the apprentice he had "disputed" with about the education of womankind, helped him get away secretly. Franklin himself tells of this:

"He (Collins) agreed with the captain of a New York sloop for my passage. I was taken on board privately, and as we had a fair wind, in three days I found myself in New York, near three hundred miles from home, a boy of seventeen, without the least recommendation to, or knowledge of, any person in the place, and with very little money in my pocket."

Now was Ben's opportunity to run away to sea while he was about it. But he said that his "inclinations for the sea were by this time worn

out," probably by the knowledge of his sailor brother's hardships and death.

As soon as Brother James found that Ben had gone, he advertised in his newspaper for "a likely lad for an apprentice," not realizing what a very "likely lad" he had lost by his own overbearing treatment of his brother. Although the old man of seventy, looking back upon the acts of a boy of seventeen, pronounced his running away the first great mistake of his life, it seems to have been overruled for the best.

At this time Boston, with a population of ten thousand, was the largest city in America, Philadelphia, with about eight thousand, second, and New York, third. There was only one printer in New York, an old man named William Bradford, who had come over from Philadelphia, where he had quarreled with Keith, the Governor of Pennsylvania. He had no place for young Franklin, but said, to comfort the disappointed youth "My son at Philadelphia has lately lost his principal hand. He may employ you."

So, with a sinking heart, young Franklin decided to go on to Philadelphia. Franklin describes his departure from New York:

"Philadelphia was a hundred miles further; I set out, however, in a boat for Amboy, leaving my chest and things to follow me round by sea (coming up the Delaware to Philadelphia).

"In crossing the bay (to Amboy) we met with a squall that tore our rotten sail to pieces, prevented our getting into the Kill (river or inlet) and drove us up on Long Island. On our way, a drunken Dutchman, who was a passenger, too, fell overboard; when he was sinking I reached through the water to his shock pate and drew him up, so that we got him again. His ducking sobered him a little, and he went to sleep, taking first out of his pocket a book which he desired I would dry for him. It proved to be my old favorite author, Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," in Dutch, finely printed on good paper, with copper cuts, a dress better than I had ever seen it wear in its own language. I have since found that it has been translated into most of the languages of Europe, and suppose it has been more generally read than any other book, except perhaps the Bible."

Dr. Franklin, when he wrote of this adventure of his youth, had written "Poor Richard's Almanac," which hung in thousands of American

homes alongside of the Bible and "The Pilgrim's Progress." The proverbs of "Poor Richard" were already as familiar as those of Solomon. He does not hint at this, though he must have known it. Franklin's modesty and simplicity add a special charm to his writings. He goes on with his account of his journey to Philadelphia, which for simple and vivid language reminds the reader of St. Luke's description of the shipwreck of St. Paul, in "The Acts of the Apostles:"

"When we drew near the island, we found it was at a place where there could be no landing, there being a great surf on the stony beach. So we dropt anchor, and swung round toward the shore. Some people came down to the water's edge and hallooed to us, as we did to them; but the wind was so high and the surf so loud that we could not hear so as to understand each other.

"There were canoes on the shore, and we made signs and hallooed that they should fetch us (ashore); but they either did not understand us or thought it impracticable, so they went away, and night coming on, we had no remedy but to wait till the wind should abate; and, in the mean-

time, the boatman and I concluded to sleep if we could; and so (we) crowded into the scuttle (hold) with the Dutchman, who was still wet, and the spray, beating over the head of our boat, leaked through to us, so that we were soon almost as wet as he. In this manner we lay all night, with very little rest; but the wind abating the next day, we made shift to reach Amboy before night, having been thirty hours on the water, without victuals or any drink but a bottle of filthy rum, the water we sailed on being salt.

"In the evening (after landing) I found myself very feverish, and went in to bed; but, having read somewhere that cold water drank plentifully was good for a fever, I followed the prescription, sweat plentifully most of the night, my fever left me, and in the morning, crossing the ferry, I proceeded on my journey on foot, having fifty miles to Burlington, where I was told I should find boats that would carry me the rest of the way to Philadelphia."

Amboy was located at the mouth of the Raritan, on the coast of New Jersey, called, in Franklin's day, "the Jerseys" (East and West Jersey). The fever-sick runaway took the ferry

across from Amboy to Brunswick, and started out in a southwesterly direction (walking past the place where Washington was to cross the Delaware, over fifty years later) and striding through Trenton and Bordentown, to Burlington, New Jersey, a little village beside the wide Delaware River.

It was a long walk through the mud and pouring rain. As he splashed along the country roads, drenched to the skin, the half-sick young fellow had plenty of time to think of the comfortable home he had left behind, and of his apprentice friends in Boston. What if he should fail to find work in Philadelphia? What if he should be arrested? Such things often happened. If he did not find employment in Philadelphia there were no other cities in America large enough to support a printing house. What could he do? He wished he had learned one of the other trades his good father had taken him to see. There were bricklayers and cutlers in almost every place. Could he bear to face his brother, his father, and the Boston acquaintances again? He had but little money. If he should have to go back home, it must be on foot, like

the returning Prodigal. He would have to say, "Father, I have sinned," and his brother would be even more cruel and unkind than the cold-hearted elder brother in the parable.

Young Franklin's thoughts were not pleasant company as he trudged along in the rain that day. It is no wonder that he remembered it all so vividly that he wrote, nearly fifty years afterward:

"It rained hard all the day; I was thoroughly soaked, and by noon a good deal tired, so I stopt at a poor inn, where I stayed all night, beginning now to wish that I had never left home. I cut so miserable a figure, too, that I found, by the questions asked me (that) I was suspected to be some runaway servant, and in danger of being taken up on that suspicion. However, I proceeded the next day, and got in the evening to an inn, within eight or ten miles of Burlington, kept by one Dr. Brown.

"He entered into conversation with me while I took some refreshment, and finding I had read a little, became very sociable. Our acquaintance continued as long as he lived."

Young Franklin was a strange mixture—a printer's apprentice who had "read a little" of

WE LANDED AT THE MARKET STREET WHARF.

philosophy, poetry, the Bible, "The Pilgrim's Progress," and so on. Instead of being arrested as a runaway servant, he was hospitably entertained and formed a life-long friendship with a learned physician who was something of a writer, like Dr. Oliver Goldsmith, Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, or Dr. Weir Mitchell.

He stayed at Dr. Brown's tavern that night, and walked on eight or ten miles to Burlington the next morning. It was Saturday, and he found to his great disappointment that the boat for Philadelphia had gone, and he would now have to wait till the following Tuesday—three days! He was tired of walking, and the drenchings he had suffered did not hasten his recovery from fever. He stood on the bank of the Delaware and wondered what to do next. He decided to go back and ask the advice of the woman who had sold him some gingerbread to eat on the boat. She invited him to stay at her house until the next boat day. This was nearly one hundred years before Robert Fulton invented the steamboat, so all the boats and ships in Franklin's time were propelled by means of sails. He accepted the woman's kind offer, and she tried to persuade him to remain in Burling-

ton and go into business there. But Franklin himself explains why he did not stay:

"However, walking in the evening by the side of the river, a boat came by, which I found was going toward Philadelphia, with several people in her. They took me in, and, as there was no wind, we rowed all the way; and about midnight, not having yet seen the city, some of the company were confident we must have passed it, and would row no further; the others knew not where we were; so we put toward the shore, got into a creek, landed near a fence, with the rails of which we made a fire, the night being cold, in October, and there we remained till daylight.

"Then one of the company knew the place to be Cooper's Creek, a little above Philadelphia, which we saw as soon as we got out of the creek, and arrived there about eight or nine o'clock on the Sunday morning, and landed at the Market Street wharf."

CHAPTER VI

Finding Friends in Philadelphia

On Sunday morning, the 10th of October, 1723, Benjamin Franklin arrived in Philadelphia for the first time. It certainly did not seem to be an important event to those who were with him. They saw only a pale, tired, sleepy youth in rain-soaked clothing. He describes his own appearance:

"I was in my working dress, my best clothes being to come round by sea. I was dirty from my journey; my pockets were stuffed out with shirts and stockings, and I knew no soul nor where to look for lodging. I was fatigued with traveling, rowing, and want of rest. I was very hungry; and my whole stock of cash consisted of a Dutch dollar and about a shilling in copper. The latter I gave the people of the boat for my passage, who at first refused it on account of my rowing, but I insisted on their taking it. A man

being sometimes more generous when he has a little money than when he has plenty; perhaps through fear of being thought to have but little."

With only the silver dollar left, young Franklin started off up street to find something to eat. Gazing about, he came to what was evidently the market house, when he met a boy with some bread. Ben asked the lad where to buy bread and was directed to a baker's on Second Street. Hurrying to the place he asked for biscuit, or big crackers, such as were made in Boston. The baker did not understand, for Boston biscuits were not made in Philadelphia. Then the lad asked for a three-penny loaf and they said they had no three-penny loaves. At last Benjamin threw down the Dutch dollar and ordered "three-penny worth of any sort." The baker gave him "three great puffy rolls," and a large quantity of change in silver and copper coins. The Boston boy was astonished at the quantity of bread. As his capacious pockets were already "stuffed out with shirts and stockings," he took a roll under each arm, and walked along the streets gnawing and munching the third loaf; he knew of no place where he could sit and eat it in a respectable manner. Referring to this Frank-

lin wrote that he "made a most awkward, ridiculous appearance."

This was to Ben Franklin a memorable incident, for as he walked along devouring his Sunday breakfast in the street, he saw a young girl about his own age standing in the doorway of her father's house laughing at him. That girl was his future wife.

After this absurd meeting with the young woman he was to marry, Ben Franklin "turned and went down Chestnut Street and part of Walnut Street," he said, "eating my roll all the way, and coming round, found myself again at Market Street wharf, near the boat I came in, to which I went for a draught of river water; and being filled with one of my rolls, gave the other two to a woman and her child that came down the river in the boat with us, and were waiting to go farther.

"Thus refreshed, I walked again up the street, which by this time had many clean-dressed people in it, who were all walking the same way. I joined them, and thereby was led into the great meeting-house of the Quakers near the market. I sat down among them, and after looking round a while and hearing nothing

said, and being drowsy through labor and want of rest the preceding night, I fell fast asleep and continued so till the meeting broke up, when one was kind enough to rouse me. This was, therefore, the first house I was in, or slept in, in Philadelphia."

It was evidently a "silent meeting," which the Friends often have, for no one was expected to speak unless moved by the Spirit. After the sleepy youth had stumbled out of the meeting-house, he walked down toward the river. On the way he says: "I met a young Quaker whose countenance I liked, and accosting him, requested he would tell me where a stranger could get lodging. We were then near the sign of the 'Three Mariners.'

" 'Here,' says he, 'is one place that entertains strangers, but it is not a reputable house; if thee wilt walk with me, I'll show thee a better.'

"He brought me to the 'Crooked Billet' in Water Street. Here I got a dinner, and while I was eating it, several sly questions were asked me, as it seemed to be suspected, from my youth and appearance, that I might be some runaway.

"After dinner my sleepiness returned, and being shown to a bed, I lay down without undress-

ing, and slept till six in the evening, was called to supper, went to bed very early and slept soundly till next morning. Then I made myself as tidy as I could, and went to Andrew Bradford the printer.

"I found in the shop the old man his father, whom I had seen at New York, and who, traveling on horseback, had got to Philadelphia before me. He introduced me to his son, who received me civilly, gave me a breakfast, but told me he did not at present want a hand, being lately supplied with one; but there was another printer in town, lately set up, one Keimer, who perhaps might employ me; if not, I should be welcome to lodge at his house, and he would give me a little work now and then till fuller business should offer.

"The old gentleman said he would go with me to the new printer; and when we found him, 'Neighbor,' says Bradford, 'I have brought to see you a young man of your business; perhaps you may want such a one.' "

Keimer was a queer character with whom Benjamin Franklin afterward had much to do. He asked the young stranger a few questions, set him to work, and, being satisfied that the

youth was a good printer, promised him employment soon. This must have lifted a heavy load from the heart of the runaway, for it meant that he need not return to his ugly elder brother and be ashamed in the sight of his family and friends in Boston.

It is a pleasant picture—that of the established printer's father taking the young applicant straight to his son's new rival to find work for the stranger. But Keimer did not know that the old man was himself a New York printer and especially interested in the business of his chief competitor in Philadelphia. The old gentleman slyly asked the new printer questions about his prospects and plans, which Keimer answered without reserve, telling that he expected to get the greater part of the printing business of Philadelphia into his own hands, and so on. The shrewd Yankee lad looked on in astonishment, and afterward said of it: "I, who stood by and heard all, saw immediately that one of them was a crafty old sophister, and the other a mere novice. Bradford left me with Keimer, who was greatly surprised when I told him who the old man was."

The printer who had recently died was a well-

known citizen of Philadelphia, named Aquila Rose, who had been clerk of the Pennsylvania Assembly, and something of a poet. Keimer thought himself gifted in this respect, and, when Benjamin Franklin first came, the old printer was composing a poem in his mind while "composing" it in type. This he entitled "An Elegy on Aquila Rose." Here is Franklin's description of his first situation:

"Keimer's printing house, I found, consisted of an old shattered press, and one small, worn-out font of English, which he was then using himself. Keimer made verses, but very indifferently. He could not be said to *write* them, for his manner was to compose them in the types directly out of his head. So there being no copy (writing to set type from) and the Elegy likely to require all the letter (font of type), no one could help him.

"I endeavored to put his press (which he had not yet used, and of which he understood nothing) into order fit to be worked with; and promising to come and print off his Elegy as soon as he should have got it ready, I returned to Bradford's, who gave me a little job to do for the present; and there I lodged and dieted

(boarded). A few days after, Keimer sent for me to print off the Elegy. And now he had got another pair of cases, and a pamphlet to reprint, on which he set me to work.

"These two printers I found poorly qualified for their business. Bradford had not been bred to it, and was very illiterate; and Keimer, though something of a scholar, was a mere compositor, knowing nothing of presswork. At this time he did not profess any particular religion but something of all on occasions; was very ignorant of the world, and had, as I afterward found, a good deal of the knave in his composition. He did not like my lodging at Bradford's while I worked with him. He had a house, indeed, but without furniture; so he could not lodge me, but he got me a lodging at Mr. Read's, who was the owner of his house; and my chest and clothes being come by this time, I made rather a more respectable appearance in the eyes of Miss Read than I had done when she first happened to see me eating my roll in the street."

When young Franklin had steady employment and a pleasant boarding place he began to feel at home in Philadelphia. He made acquaintances easily. Men and women, old and

young, seemed to take an interest in him. He was good-natured, frank and generous, and had a keen sense of humor, which goes a long way toward making friends in a strange place. He chose the right kind of associates, "among the young people of the town, that were lovers of reading," he wrote, "with whom I spent my evenings very pleasantly; and gaining money by my industry and frugality, I lived very agreeably, forgetting Boston as much as I could, and not desiring that any there should know where I resided, except my friend Collins, who was in my secret and kept it when I wrote to him."

But Benjamin Franklin never lost his love for the home of his boyhood. He was an affectionate youth, and while he felt resentment against his brother James, he longed for his home with its large family of brothers and sisters. It was not because he lacked feeling toward his father and mother, but because he feared that his brother, in his wrath, might have him arrested, even in Philadelphia, and brought back to Boston in disgrace.

One of Benjamin's older sisters had been married to a shipmaster named Robert Holmes. This brother-in-law's sloop carried on a thriv-

ing coast trade between Boston and the Delaware. While on one of these cruises, stopping at Newcastle, Delaware, forty miles from Philadelphia, Captain Holmes heard that his young brother-in-law was in Philadelphia. He at once wrote Ben a brotherly letter, telling him how anxious his parents and friends were after his sudden disappearance. He assured the lad that they were all friendly to him, and, if he would return to Boston all would be forgiven, and everything would be arranged to suit him, which meant that he need not work for his brother again, as an apprentice, unless he chose to do so.

Ben wrote Robert Holmes a full letter, giving his reasons for leaving Boston so abruptly, putting the matter, as Franklin wrote, "in such a light as to convince him that I was not so wrong as he had apprehended."

It so happened that when Captain Holmes received this letter from his runaway brother-in-law he was in company with Sir William Keith, then Governor of Pennsylvania and "the Delaware Counties." Holmes showed his young brother's letter to the Governor, who was surprised that a boy of seventeen could write a letter so cleverly worded and so correctly spelled

and punctuated. Sir William said that such a promising young man ought to be encouraged, and as the two printers then in Philadelphia were either ignorant or incapable, he would like to set young Franklin up in business there. He, as Governor of the Province, could give him the official printing to do, and use his influence to help him in many ways. Of this Franklin wrote:

"This my brother-in-law afterwards told me in Boston, but I knew as yet nothing of it; when, one day, Keimer and I being at work together near the window, we saw the Governor and another gentleman (who proved to be Colonel French, of Newcastle), finely dressed, come directly across the street to our house, and heard them at the door.

"Keimer ran down immediately, thinking it a visit to him; but the Governor inquired for me, came up, and with a condescension and politeness I had been quite unused to, made me many compliments, desired to be acquainted with me, blamed me kindly for not having made myself known to him when I first came to the place, and would have me away with him to the tavern, where he was going with Colonel French.

"I was not a little surprised, and Keimer stared like a pig poisoned. I went, however, with the Governor and Colonel French to a tavern at the corner of Third Street, and he proposed my setting up my business, laid before me the possibilities of success, and both he and Colonel French assured me I should have their interest and influence in procuring the public business of both governments (of Pennsylvania and Delaware).

"On my doubting whether my father would assist me in it, Sir William said he would give me a letter to him, in which he would state the advantages, and he did not doubt of prevailing with him.

"So it was concluded I should return to Boston in the first vessel, with the Governor's letter recommending me to my father. In the meantime the intention was to be kept a secret, and I went on working with Keimer as usual, the Governor sending for me now and then to dine with him—a very great honor I thought it!—and conversing with me in the most affable, familiar, and friendly manner imaginable."

Keimer had strange religious notions, one of which was that it was wrong to cut off the beard.

Another belief that Saturday, not Sunday, should be observed as the Sabbath. Young Franklin not having to work on Saturday or Sunday, spent two days a week in reading, and he made good use of his opportunities.

For some time the young printer, himself a vegetarian, induced his employer to give up eating meat; but Keimer began to sigh for the "flesh pots of Egypt," and soon fell back to eating meat in large quantities, for he was a greedy old man.

CHAPTER VII

The Return of the Runaway

"About the end of April, 1724," wrote Franklin, "a little vessel offered for Boston. I took leave of Keimer as going to see my friends. The Governor gave me an ample letter, saying many flattering things of me to my father, and strongly recommending the project of my setting up at Philadelphia as a thing that must make my fortune.

"We struck a shoal going down the bay, and sprung a leak; we had a blustering time at sea, and were obliged to pump almost continually, at which I took my turn. We arrived safe, however, at Boston in about a fortnight."

When young Franklin appeared again in Boston, after an absence of seven months, it was almost as if he had risen from the dead. As his brother-in-law had not yet returned, and had not written to the family, they were all surprised to see him. He tells of his visit to his brother:

"I went to see him at his printing house. I was better dressed than ever while in his service, having a genteel new suit from head to foot, a watch, and my pockets lined with near five pounds sterling in silver. He received me not very frankly, looked me all over, and turned to his work again.

"The journeymen printers were inquisitive where I had been, what sort of a country it was, and how I liked it. I praised it much, and the happy life I led in it, expressing strongly my intention of returning to it; and, one of them asking what kind of money we had there, I produced a handful of silver, and spread it before them, which was a kind of raree-show they had

not been used to, paper being the money of Boston.

"Then I took an opportunity of letting them see my watch; and lastly (my brother still grum and sullen), I took my leave. This visit of mine offended him extremely; for, when my mother some time after, spoke of a reconciliation, and of her wishes to see us on good terms together, and that we might live for the future as brothers, he said I had insulted him in such a manner before his people that he could never forget or forgive it. In this, however, he was mistaken."

James Franklin did not realize that it is not those who have wronged us that are hardest to forgive, but *those whom we have wronged,* whose very presence is a reproach. He felt insulted because his young brother called on him in a friendly spirit, instead of seeking revenge. Besides, Ben showed that he was capable of earning much more money than his "keep" and clothing without being beaten and abused. But the younger brother recognized James's unfortunate disposition and freely forgave him for his unkind treatment, helping him in time of need, later educating James's son and setting

him up in the printing business, like the kind, indulgent uncle he was.

Young Collins was greatly pleased with the success of the friend he had aided to escape and, charmed with Ben's glowing accounts of his experiences in the "new country," determined to throw up his position in the Boston post office and try his fortunes in Pennsylvania. Indeed, he became impatient because Ben had to wait for his father to make up his mind about setting him up in business under the patronage of such a man as Governor Keith seemed to be, so Collins set off ahead, leaving his books, "which were a pretty collection of mathematicks and natural philosophy," for Ben to bring with his own books to New York, where the former postal clerk proposed to wait for him.

About the matter which had brought him back to Boston, Franklin wrote:

"My father received the Governor's letter with some apparent surprise, but said little of it to me for some days, when, Captain Holmes, returning, he showed it to him, asked him if he knew Keith, and what kind of man he was; adding his opinion that he must be of small discretion to think of setting a boy up in business who

wanted yet three years of being at man's estate.

"Holmes said what he could in favor of the project, but my father was clear in the impropriety of it, and at last gave a flat denial to it. Then he wrote a civil letter to Sir William, thanking him for the patronage he had so kindly offered me, but declining to assist me as yet in setting up, I being, in his opinion, too young to be trusted with the management of a business so important, and for which the preparation must be so expensive.

"My father, though he did not approve of Sir William's proposition, was yet pleased that I had been able to obtain so advantageous a character from a person of such note where I had resided, and that I had been so industrious and careful as to equip myself so handsomely in so short a time; therefore, seeing no prospect of an accommodation between my brother and me, he gave his consent to my returning again to Philadelphia, advised me to behave respectfully to the people there, endeavor to obtain the general esteem, and avoid lampooning and libeling, to which he thought I had too much inclination; telling me that by steady industry and prudent parsimony I might save enough by the time I

was one-and-twenty to set me up; and that if I came near the matter (amount) he would help me out with the rest.

"This was all I could obtain, except some small gifts as tokens of his and my mother's love, when I embarked again for New York, now with their approbation and their blessing."

Wise, level-headed Father Franklin! Great as was his pride in having a titled Governor become so enthusiastic over the abilities of his youngest son, he did not allow a father's vanity to trap him into any loss through indiscretion. It was his father's wisdom that made Franklin so shrewd and successful in giving "Poor Richard's" advice, full of thrifty common sense to all the English-speaking world.

If Ben thought his father a "slow-coach," or perhaps jealous of his son's success, as James Franklin seemed to be of his young half-brother's, he had occasion to learn, within a few years that his father was in the right, as fathers are likely to be. Lads of Ben's age, when much praised by others, whether in school or in business, begin to think their parents behind the times, and imagine that they know more than parents or teachers, only to learn to say, as

Benjamin Franklin did, after years of trial and sorrow, "Father was right."

The young printer may have had this experience in mind when he put in his "Almanack:" "A good kick out of doors is worth all the rich uncles in the world."

Before Benjamin went back to Philadelphia he called on Dr. Cotton Mather, the famous minister, whose book, "Essays to Do Good," had made a strong impression on his boyish mind. The old preacher received the youth in his library and they had a friendly chat together.

When young Franklin was leaving, Dr. Mather showed him out of his rambling old house by a shorter way. Still talking, they were groping through a dark passage when Dr. Mather suddenly called out, "Stoop! stoop!" but the young man hit his head against a low beam before he grasped the minister's meaning. Cotton Mather, who never missed a chance to teach a lesson, gave the lad this fatherly counsel: "You are young and have the world before you. Stoop as you go through it and you will miss many hard thumps."

Instead of thinking the old minister a bore he followed the counsel, for all through life Benja-

min Franklin knew how to "stoop to conquer." Long afterward he said of Cotton Mather's helpful words, "This advice, thus beat into my head, has frequently been of use to me, and I often think of it when I see pride mortified and misfortunes brought upon people by their carrying their heads too high."

This time Benjamin left Boston in triumph, instead of stealing away, as before, in defeat and disgrace. Franklin relates his adventures in Newport and on his way to New York:

"The sloop putting in at Newport, Rhode Island, I visited my brother John, who had been married and settled there some years. He received me very affectionately, for he always loved me. A friend of his, one Vernon, having some money due him in Pennsylvania, about thirty-five pounds currency, desired I would receive it for him, and keep it till I had his directions what to remit it in. Accordingly, he gave me an order. This afterwards occasioned me a good deal of uneasiness.

CHAPTER VIII

False Friends

"At New York," wrote Franklin, "I found my friend Collins, who had arrived there some time before me. We had been intimate from children, and had read the same books together; but he had the advantage of more time for reading and studying and a wonderful genius for mathematical learning, in which he far outstripped me.

"While I lived in Boston most of my hours of leisure for conversation were spent with him, and he continued a sober as well as an industrious lad; was much respected for his learning by several of the clergy and other gentlemen, and seemed to promise making a good figure in life.

"But during my absence he had acquired a habit of sotting with brandy; and I found by his own account, and what I heard from others, that he had been drunk every day since his arrival at

New York, and behaved very oddly. He had gamed (gambled), too, and lost his money so that I was obliged to discharge (pay for) his lodgings, and defray his expenses to and at Philadelphia, which proved extremely inconvenient to me.

"The then Governor of New York, Burnet (son of Bishop Burnet), hearing from the captain that a young man, one of his passengers, had a great many books, desired he, the captain, would bring me to see him. I waited upon him accordingly, and should have taken Collins with me but that he was not sober.

"The Governor treated me with great civility, showed me his library, which was a very large one, and we had a good deal of conversation about books and authors. This was the second Governor who had done me the honor to take notice of me; which to a poor boy like me was very pleasing."

Young Franklin, who could receive all these honors without "turning his head," was sometimes imposed upon by his most intimate friends. Of his first experience in this line Franklin wrote:

"We proceeded to Philadelphia. I received

on the way Vernon's money, without which we could hardly have finished our journey. Collins wished to be employed in some counting-house; but whether they discovered his dramming (drinking) by his breath or by his behavior, tho' he had some recommendations, he met with no success in any application, and continued lodging and boarding at the same house with me, and at my expense. Knowing I had that money of Vernon's he was continually borrowing of me, still promising repayment as soon as he should be in business. At length he had got so much of it that I was distressed to think what I should do in case of being called on to remit it.

"His drinking continued, about which we sometimes quarreled; for, when a little intoxicated, he was very fractious.

"Once, in a boat on the Delaware with some other young men, he refused to row in his turn.

" 'I will be rowed home,' says he.

" 'We will not row you,' says I.

" 'You must, or stay all night on the water,' says he, 'just as you please.'

"The others said, 'Let us row; what signifies it?'

"But, my mind being soured with his other conduct, I continued to refuse. So he swore he would make me row or throw me overboard; and, coming along, stepping on the thwarts toward me when he came up and struck at me I clapped my hand under his thigh, and rising, pitched him head foremost into the river.

"I knew he was a good swimmer, so was under little concern about him; but before he would get round to lay hold of the boat we had, with a few strokes, pulled her out of his reach; and ever when he drew near the boat we asked if he would row, striking a few strokes to slide her away from him. He was ready to die with vexation, and obstinately would not promise to row. However, seeing him at last beginning to tire, we lifted him in, and brought him home dripping wet in the evening.

"We hardly exchanged a civil word afterward, and a West India captain who had a commission to procure a tutor for the sons of a gentleman at Barbados, happening to meet with him, agreed to carry him thither. He left me then, promising to remit me the first money he should receive, in order to discharge the debt; but I never heard of him after."

I PITCHED HIM INTO THE RIVER.

Old Dr. Franklin, looking back upon his earlier days, saw that his father was right in not setting him up in business at eighteen, for, said he, "the breaking into this money of Vernon's was one of the first great errata (errors) of my life; and this affair showed that my father was not much out in his judgment when he supposed me too young to manage business of importance."

Sir William Keith, when he read Josiah Franklin's reply to his letter, pooh-poohed and said it was "too prudent." He flattered young Franklin by intimating that not all old men were discreet nor all young men indiscreet. "Since your father will not set you up," he said to Benjamin, "I will do it myself. Give me an inventory of the things necessary to be had from England and I will send for them. You shall repay me when you are able; I am resolved to have a good printer here, and I am sure you must succeed."

Ben thought the Governor one of the best men in the world. In order to keep their intention of starting another printing office in Philadelphia a secret from Keimer, the youth did not mention his growing prospects to others, or he might

have been warned against placing too much faith in the Governor's promises. But no one acquainted with the Governor knew what was going on, while Benjamin Franklin was happy in making up a list of the things he would need in setting up a first-class printing business. He found that it could be done for about five hundred dollars.

"Now," said Sir William, "wouldn't it be better for you to go to England yourself and select the type and other necessaries on the spot?"

Ben was easily convinced that it would be a wise thing to do, his heart throbbing with pleasure at the thought of going abroad on such business.

"Then," continued Keith, "when there you can make acquaintances and establish correspondences in the bookselling and stationery way."

"I agreed that this might be advantageous.

" 'Then,' says he, 'get yourself ready to go with *Annis,*' which was the annual ship, and the only one usually passing between London and Philadelphia. But it would be some months before *Annis* sailed, so I continued working with Keimer, fretting about the money Collins had

got from me, and in daily apprehensions of being called upon by Vernon, which, however, did not happen for some years after."

It was fortunate for Benjamin Franklin that Mr. Vernon did not demand the money while the young printer was unprepared to pay it over, and have him imprisoned for theft, or embezzlement. No wonder Dr. Franklin called that "misappropriation of funds" one of the first great mistakes of his life. Other youths have been led as innocently into the same kind of wrongdoing, and have paid the penalty by having their whole lives ruined by unfriendly persons.

Franklin tells of his youthful love affair.

"I had made some courtship during this time to Miss Read. I had a great respect and affection for her, and had some reason to believe she had the same for me, but, as I was about to take a long voyage, and we were both very young, only a little above eighteen, it was thought most prudent by her mother to prevent our going too far at present, as a marriage, if it was to take place, would be more convenient (suitable) after my return, when I should be, as I expected, set up in my business. Perhaps, too, she thought

my expectations not so well founded as I imagined them to be."

Among young Franklin's Philadelphia friends were "Charles Osborne, Joseph Watson and James Ralph, all lovers of reading. Watson was sensible, candid, frank; sincere and affectionate to his friends; but in literary matters too fond of criticizing. Ralph was ingenious, genteel in his manners, and extremely eloquent; I think I never knew a prettier talker. Both of them were great admirers of poetry, and began to try their hands in little pieces. Many pleasant walks we had together on Sundays into the woods, near the Schuylkill, where we read to one another, and conferred on what we read.

"Ralph was inclined to pursue the study of poetry, not doubting but he might become eminent in it, and make his fortune by it, alleging that the best poets must, when they first began to write, make as many faults as he did. Osborne dissuaded him, assured him he had no genius for poetry, and advised him to think of nothing beyond the business he was bred to; that, in the mercantile way, tho' he had no stock, he might by his diligence and punctuality, recommend himself to employment as a factor (an

agent or commission merchant) and in time acquire wherewith to trade on his own account. I approved the amusing one's self with poetry now and then, so far as to improve one's language, but no farther."

So Benjamin was still heeding his father's advice and was spared the fate of becoming a poet, "most probably a very bad one," as he once confessed, though he did improve himself in writing prose and rendered his name immortal by the simplicity of his writing alone, in an age when long words and long sentences were the fashion. The fate of his friend Ralph was another evidence of Josiah Franklin's warning to his son against following a mere literary or poetic career.

Ralph, being told in confidence of Franklin's intention to go to England, decided to go with him, as he said, to arrange for a commission business, so that he could make a decent living by selling English goods in Philadelphia. Franklin gave the following account of their final preparations and departure from Philadelphia:

"The Governor, seeming to like my company, had me frequently to his house, and setting me

up was always mentioned as a fixed thing. I was to take with me letters recommendatory to a number of his friends, besides the letter of credit to furnish me with the necessary money for purchasing the press and types, paper, etc. For these letters I was appointed to call at different times, when they were to be ready; but a future time was still named.

"Thus we went on till the ship, whose departure, too, had been several times postponed, was on the point of sailing. Then, when I called to take my leave and receive the letters, his secretary, Dr. Bard, came out to me and said the Governor was extremely busy in writing, but would be down at Newcastle before the ship, and there the letters would be delivered to me.

"Having taken leave of my friends, and interchanged some promises with Miss Read, I left Philadelphia in the ship, which anchored at Newcastle (Delaware). The Governor was there; but when I went to his lodgings, the secretary came to me from him with the civilest message in the world, that he could not see me, being engaged in business of the utmost importance, but should send the letters to me on board, wished me heartily a good voyage and a speedy

return, etc. I returned on board a little puzzled, but still not doubting.

"Mr. Andrew Hamilton, a famous lawyer of Philadelphia, had taken passage in the same ship for himself and son, and with Mr. Denham, a Quaker merchant, had engaged the great cabin; so that Ralph and I were forced to take up a berth in the steerage, and none on board knowing us, were considered as ordinary persons."

It was this Andrew Hamilton who gave the State House (now known as Independence Hall) to Pennsylvania. He was a man of great wealth and influence, whose son afterward became the Governor of the Province. Lawyer Hamilton was called back to Philadelphia by an urgent case, and took his son with him, so Franklin and Ralph were invited into the cabin in their places. The distinction between cabin and steerage passengers seems to have been as great in those days of simplicity and little travel as today. Franklin went on to tell the story of the rude opening of his eyes to the true character of the too affable Governor.

"Understanding that Colonel French had brought on board the Governor's despatches, I asked the captain for those letters which were to

be under my care. He said all were put into the bag together and he could not then come at them; but before we landed in England I should have an opportunity of picking them out; so I was satisfied for the present, and we proceeded on our voyage.

"We had a sociable company in the cabin, and lived uncommonly well, having the addition of all Mr. Hamilton's stores, who had laid in plentifully. In this passage Mr. Denham contracted a friendship for me that continued during his life. The voyage was not otherwise a pleasant one, for we had a great deal of bad weather.

"When we came into the Channel the captain kept his word with me, and gave me an opportunity of examining the bag for the Governor's letters. I found none upon which my name was put as under my care. I picked out six or seven, that, by the handwriting, I thought might be the promised letters, especially as one of them was directed to Basket, the king's printer, and another to some stationer.

"We arrived in London the 24th of December, 1724. I waited upon the stationer who came first in my way, delivering the letter as from Governor Keith.

" 'I don't know such a person,' says he; but, opening the letter, 'Oh! this is from Riddlesden. I have lately found him to be a complete rascal, and I will have nothing to do with him, nor receive any letters from him.'

"So, putting the letter into my hand, he turned on his heel and left me to serve some customer. I was surprised to find these were not the Governor's letters; and, after recollecting circumstances, I began to doubt his sincerity.

"I found my friend Denham and opened the whole affair to him. He let me into Keith's character; told me there was not the least probability that he had written any letters for me; that no one who knew him had the smallest dependence on him; and he laughed at the notion of the Governor's giving me a letter of credit, having, as he said, no credit to give.

"On my expressing some concern about what I should do, he advised me to endeavor getting some employment in the way of my business.

" 'Among the printers here,' said he, 'you will improve yourself, and when you return to America you will set up to better advantage.'

"But what shall we think of a Governor's playing such pitiful tricks, and imposing so

grossly on a poor ignorant boy! It was a habit he had acquired. He wished to please everybody; and having little to give, he gave expectations. He was otherwise an ingenious, sensible man, a pretty good writer, and a good Governor for the people, tho' not for the proprietaries (the descendants of William Penn who, under the king's grant, still owned Pennsylvania), whose instructions he sometimes disregarded. Several of our best laws were of his planning, and passed during his administration."

It was a sad Christmas for the young American. Instead of buying the type, press and other materials for the printing house with which he was to make a fortune in Philadelphia, Benjamin Franklin had to go around looking for a job in the greatest city in the world, compared with which Boston and Philadelphia, though they were the largest cities in America, were mere country towns.

Young Franklin soon found that his friend, Ralph, had no intention whatever of returning to his wife and child in America. He first tried to find a place as an actor, but Wilkes, the great comedian, told him he could not possibly succeed in that profession. Then he proposed to

edit a paper like the "Spectator," but that also was out of the question. Disappointed in these directions he sought to obtain writing or copying (there were no typewriters then) for the lawyers about the Temple, but he was disappointed even in that.

Benjamin Franklin stood by his friend, supporting him almost entirely, paying his board and taking him to places of amusement for about a year, when Ralph gave up looking for work in London and went out into Berkshire, where he taught ten or a dozen boys reading and writing, at a sixpence each per week. From there he sent poems for Franklin to criticize. At last, becoming offended, he wrote to Franklin that he thought a friend who had treated him so badly did not deserve to be paid.

"So," wrote the old doctor, many years afterward, "I found I was never to expect his repaying me what I lent to him, or advanced for him. This, however, was not then of much consequence, as he was totally unable, and in the loss of his friendship I found myself relieved from a burthen."

From this point the difference in the lives of these two American friends seemed to widen.

Young Franklin, by following the path of rectitude, became the most beloved man of his time, while young Ralph, after deserting his wife and child, led a vicious life, deceiving his friends and others, assuming Franklin's name to hide his own wrongdoing, yet hoping to atone for the crookedness of it all by writing brilliant poetry. Even in this he made a miserable failure, for Alexander Pope, the first poet of the time, ridiculed Ralph's efforts in a great poetical tirade against the dunces who attempted to write poetry and failed:

"Silence, ye wolves! while Ralph to
Cynthia howls,
And makes night hideous—answer
him ye owls."

Thus the name of the false friend, who sought to be great without being good, has come down to us through the centuries with scorn and ridicule only because Franklin had befriended him.

CHAPTER IX

Alone in London

Franklin, having a trade, and being built of better materials than Ralph the deserter, found employment without delay. "I immediately got work at Palmer's," he wrote, "then a famous printing house in Bartholomew Close, and there I continued near a year. I was pretty diligent, but spent with Ralph a good deal of my earnings in going to plays and other places of amusement. We had together consumed all my pistoles (a pistole was worth $3 to $4), and now just rubbed on from hand to mouth. He seemed quite to forget his wife and child, and I, by degrees, my engagements with Miss Read, to whom I never wrote more than one letter, and that was to let her know that I was not likely soon to return.

"This was another of the great errata of my life, which I should wish to correct if I were to live it over again. In fact, by our expenses, I was constantly kept unable to pay my passage (back to America)."

While working at Palmer's this youth of nineteen "wrote a little metaphysical piece entitled 'A Dissertation on Liberty and Necessity, Pleasure and Pain,'" which he dedicated to Ralph. This essay commended the young printer to Mr. Palmer, his employer, and to some literary people in London, but Franklin afterward considered it a great mistake to have printed in a pamphlet and distributed it.

Even though the young American seemed to forget his lady love, he could not live without books. He told how he procured good reading:

"While I lodged in Little Britain (a district of London) I made an acquaintance with one Wilcox, a bookseller, whose shop was at the next door. He had an immense collection of second-hand books. Circulating libraries were not then in use; but we agreed that, on certain reasonable terms, which I have now forgotten, I might take, read, and return any of his books. This I esteemed a great advantage, and I made as much use of it as I could."

Franklin himself founded the first circulating library in America. What a boon the ordinary free library of to-day would have been to that

home student! After he had worked at Palmer's about a year, and having no longer Ralph's company, he began to think of getting money enough ahead to return to America. He soon found work "at Watts's, a still greater printing house."

The young American printer was permitted to meet some of the prominent Englishmen of his day. While the great men of London were seeking out young Franklin he was doing the hardest kind of work in Watts's printing establishment, and trying to benefit his fellow-workmen by instructing them in true temperance. He gives a humorous account of this experience.

"I took to working at press, imagining I felt a want of bodily exercise I had been used to in America, where presswork is mixed with composing (setting type). I drank only water; the other workmen, near fifty in number, were great guzzlers of beer. On occasion I carried up and down stairs a large form of types in each hand, when others carried but one in both hands. They wondered to see, from this and several instances, that the 'Water American,' as they called me, was stronger than themselves.

"We had an alehouse boy who attended always in the house to supply the workmen. My companion at the press drank every day a pint before breakfast; a pint at breakfast with his bread and cheese; a pint between breakfast and dinner; a pint at dinner; a pint in the afternoon about six o'clock, and another when he had done his day's work.

"I thought it a detestable custom; but it was necessary, he supposed, to drink *strong* beer that he might be *strong* to labor. I endeavored to convince him that the bodily strength afforded by beer could only be in proportion to the grain or flour of the barley dissolved in the water of which it was made; that there was more flour in a pennyworth of bread; and therefore if he would eat that with a pint of water, it would give him more strength than a quart of beer.

"He drank on, however, and had four or five shillings to pay out of his wages every Saturday night for that muddling liquor, an expense I was free from. And thus these poor fellows keep themselves always under!"

O rare Ben Franklin! Hardly more than a boy, he was giving the best advice and setting a consistent example to the men who worked with

THE "WATER AMERICAN" WAS STRONGER THAN THEMSELVES.

him. Temperance, as known to-day, was unheard of in Franklin's time. Ministers drank liquors freely and no one thought it was wrong. Nowadays a printer drinking beer in working hours would be discharged quickly. Yet, according to Franklin's story, the nearest alehouse keeper found it worth while to keep a boy in the printing house all the time to serve the men with their several quarts a day. The "four or five shillings a week" which they had to pay for beer was sometimes about one-third of their weekly wage, and a terrible drain upon the purses of the men, especially of those who had families to support. Here is an instance of Franklin's early thrift and good nature:

"Watts, after some weeks, desiring to have me in the composing room, I left the pressmen; a new *bien venu* (French for *welcome*) or sum for drink, being five shillings, was demanded of me by the compositors. I thought it an imposition, as I had paid below; the master thought so, too, and forbade my paying it.

"I stood out two or three weeks, was accordingly considered as an excommunicate, and had so many little pieces of private mischief done me, by mixing my sorts (different kinds of type),

transposing my pages, breaking my matter (type that is set up), etc., etc., if I were ever so little out of the room, and all ascribed to the 'chapel ghost,' which they said ever haunted those not regularly admitted, that, notwithstanding the master's protection, I found myself obliged to comply and pay the money, convinced of the folly of being on ill terms with those one is compelled to live with continually."

Franklin's success seems to have been due largely to the fact that he did not retain a grudge or maintain a quarrel. He was always so good-natured that people not only could not quarrel with him, but came to like him heartily. He had common sense enough to see that, as a matter of business, it was better to be on friendly terms with his fellow-workmen.

"I was now on a fair footing with them, and soon acquired considerable influence. I proposed some alterations in their chapel laws, and carried them against all opposition. From my example a great part of them left their muddling breakfast of beer, and bread and cheese, finding they could, with me, be supplied from a neighboring house with a large porringer of hot water-gruel, sprinkled with pepper, crumbed with

bread, and a bit of butter in it, for the price of a pint of beer, namely, three halfpence.

"This was a more comfortable as well as cheaper breakfast, and kept their heads clearer. Those who continued sotting with beer all day, were often, by not paying, out of credit at the alehouse, and used to make interest with me to get beer—their *light,* as they phrased it, *being out!* I watched the pay-table on Saturday night, and collected what I stood engaged for them, having to pay sometimes near thirty shillings on their accounts.

"This, and my being esteemed a pretty good *riggite,* that is, a jocular verbal satirist, supported my consequence (importance) in their society. My constant attendance (I never making it a St. Monday) (never stayed out Monday as if it were a holiday) recommended me to the master, and my uncommon quickness at composing (setting type) occasioned my being put upon all work of dispatch, which was generally better paid. So I went on now very agreeably."

A printing house used to be called a "chapel" because Caxton, the earliest English printer, carried on his first printing in a chapel near Westminster Abbey in London. It is believed also

that the custom of calling the printer's errand boy a "devil" came from the fact that Caxton's office boy's name was Deville. There are other theories for the naming of the "printer's devil," but this seems the simplest and most likely.

Franklin tells in his life of himself how near he came to becoming a swimming master:

"At Watts's printing house I contracted an acquaintance with an ingenious young man, one Wygate, who, having wealthy relations, had been better educated than most printers; was a tolerable Latinist, spoke French, and loved reading. I taught him and a friend of his to swim, at twice going into the river, and they soon became good swimmers.

"They introduced me to some gentlemen from the country who went to Chelsea by water. On our return, at the request of the company, whose curiosity Wygate had excited, I stripped and leaped into the river, and swam from near Chelsea to Blackfriars, performing on the way many feats of activity, both upon and under water, that surprised and pleased those to whom they were novelties."

The distance he swam was about four miles.

"I had from a child been ever delighted with

this exercise, had studied and practised all Thevenot's motions and positions, added some of my own, aiming at the graceful and easy, as well as the useful. All these I took this occasion of exhibiting to the company, and was much flattered by their admiration; and Wygate, who was desirous of becoming a master, grew more and more attached to me on that account, as well as from the similarity of our studies. He at length proposed to me traveling all over Europe together, supporting ourselves everywhere by working at our business. I was once inclined to it; but, mentioning it to my good friend Mr. Denham, with whom I often spent an hour when I had leisure, he dissuaded me from it, advising me to think only of returning to Pennsylvania, which he was now about to do.

"I was, to my surprise, sent for by a great man I knew only by name, a Sir William Wyndham, and I waited upon him. He had heard by some means or other of my swimming from Chelsea to Blackfriars, and of my teaching Wygate and another young man to swim in a few hours.

"He had two sons about to set out on their travels; he wished to have them first taught swimming, and proposed to gratify me hand-

somely if I would teach them. They were not yet come to town, and my stay was uncertain, so I could not undertake it; but from this incident I thought it likely that if I were to remain in England and open a swimming-school, I might get a good deal of money; and it struck me so strongly that, had the overture been sooner made to me, probably I should not so soon have returned to America."

Mr. Denham, young Franklin's good Quaker friend and counselor, did much for America in advising that young adventurer and philosopher to go back to his native land.

This Mr. Denham had lived, years before, in Bristol, England, and had failed in business there. So he went to America to make his fortune. Having succeeded in this, he now returned to his old home to "make good." He invited his former creditors to a dinner in Bristol. Each guest found, on turning his plate, the amount which had been due him, with the interest added.

"He (Mr. Denham) now told me he was about to return to Philadelphia, and should carry over a great quantity of goods in order to open a store there. He proposed to take me over as his clerk,

to keep his books (in which he would instruct me), copy his letters, and attend the store. He aded that as soon as I should be acquainted with mercantile business, he would promote me by sending me with a cargo of flour and bread, etc., to the West Indies, and procure me commissions from others which would be profitable; and if I managed well he would establish me handsomely. The thing pleased me, for I was grown tired of London, remembered with pleasure the happy months I had spent in Pennsylvania, and wished again to see it; therefore I immediately agreed on the terms of fifty pounds a year, Pennsylvania money; less, indeed, than my present gettings, but affording a better prospect.

"I now took leave of printing, as I thought for ever, and was daily employed in my new business, going about with Mr. Denham among the tradesmen to purchase various articles, and seeing them packed up, doing errands, calling upon workmen to dispatch, etc.; and when all was on board I had a few days' leisure.

"Thus I spent about eighteen months in London, most part of the time I worked hard at my business, and spent but little upon myself except in seeing plays and in books. My friend Ralph

had kept me poor; he owed me about twenty-seven pounds ($135), which I was never likely to receive—a great sum out of my small earnings! I loved him, notwithstanding, for he had many amiable qualities. I had by no means improved my fortune, but I had picked up some very ingenious acquaintances, whose conversation was of great advantage to me; and I had read considerably."

Whatever young Franklin found to do he did with might and main, and did it well, whether laboring at the press, swimming or reading. He worked faithfully during working hours, and spending his spare time in a profitable way.

"We sailed from Gravesend on the 23d of July, 1726. For the incidents of the voyage, perhaps the most important is the plan which I formed at sea, for regulating my future conduct in life. It is the more remarkable, as being formed when I was so young, and yet being pretty faithfully adhered to quite thro' to old age."

CHAPTER X

In Philadelphia Again Looking for Work

Old Mr. Denham and young Mr. Franklin landed in Philadelphia, October 11, 1726—three years and one day after Benjamin's first arrival at Market Street wharf. How much had happened in those three years! The poor, hard-working printer of twenty had associated with governors and other distinguished men, on both sides of the Atlantic, and was now coming back to go into the dry goods business.

Young Franklin "found sundry alterations" in Philadelphia during the two years, nearly, that he had been away. "Keith was no longer Governor, being superseded by Major Gordon. I met him walking the streets as a common citizen. He seemed a little ashamed at seeing me, but passed without saying anything.

"I should have been as much ashamed at seeing Miss Read, had not her friends, despairing, with reason, of my return after the receipt of my

letter, persuaded her to marry another, one Rogers, a potter, which was done in my absence. With him, however, she was never happy, and soon parted with him, refusing to bear his name, it being now said that he had another wife. He was a worthless fellow, tho' an excellent workman, which was the temptation to her friends. He got into debt, ran away in 1727 or 1728, went to the West Indies, and died there."

Mr. Denham opened his store at once and his versatile clerk "attended the business diligently, studied accounts, and grew, in a little time, expert at selling." Merchant and clerk lived together like father and son until Benjamin was twenty-one.

Franklin afterwards told of a sickness which overtook him then:

"When I was just past my twenty-first year I was taken ill. My distemper was a pleurisy which nearly carried me off. I suffered a great deal, gave up the point in my own mind, and was rather disappointed when I found myself recovering, regretting in some degree, that I must now, some time or other, have all that disagreeable work to do over."

Mr. Denham, meanwhile had come down with

a distemper from which he died, leaving his young friend a small legacy by word of mouth.

There was nothing for it but go back to work at his trade. Calling on the printers, he found Keimer's shop much better equipped than when he began to work in it three years before. But, while there were several hands employed there, they were not experienced. Keimer offered young Franklin "large wages, by the year, to come and take the management of his printing house that he, Keimer, might better attend his stationer's shop."

Benjamin made a formal agreement with his former employer, because he could find nothing better to do, though he had heard much against Keimer's character from the man's wife and friends in London.

But he seems to have made the best of everything, for he wrote of his experiences with the hands at Keimer's: "I began to live very agreeably, for they all respected me the more as they found Keimer incapable of instructing them, and that from me they learned something daily.

"We never worked on Saturday, that being Keimer's Sabbath, so I had two days for reading. My acquaintance with ingenious people in

the town increased. Keimer himself treated me with great civility and apparent regard, and nothing now made me uneasy but my debt to Vernon, which I was yet unable to pay, being hitherto but a poor economist. He, however, kindly made no demand of it."

Not only did Benjamin made himself useful by teaching the men in Keimer's place, but he became the first type founder in America, as he modestly explained:

"Our printing house often wanted 'sorts' (certain letters or characters to complete the fonts of type) and there was no letter (type) founder in America; I had seen types cast at James's in London, but without much attention to manner; however, I now contrived a mould, made use of the letters we had as puncheons, struck the matrices in lead, and thus supplied, in a pretty tolerable way, all deficiencies. I also engraved several things on occasion. I made the ink; I was warehouseman, and everything, and, in short, quite a factotum (do-it-all).

"But, however serviceable I might be, I found that my services became every day of less importance as the other hands improved in the business; and when Keimer paid me my second

quarter's wages he let me know that he felt them too heavy, and thought I should make an abatement. He grew by degrees less civil, put on more of the master, found fault, was captious, and seemed ready for an outbreaking. I went on, nevertheless, with a good deal of patience, thinking that his encumbered circumstances were partly the cause.

"At length a trifle snapped our connections; for, a great noise happening near the court house, I put my head out of the window to see what was the matter. Keimer, being in the street, looked up and saw me, called out in a loud voice and angry tone to mind my business, adding some reproachful words that nettled me more for their publicity; all the neighbors were looking out on the same occasion, being witness how I was treated.

"He came up immediately into the printing house, and continued the quarrel. High words passed on both sides. He gave me the quarter's warning we had stipulated, expressing a wish that he had not been obliged to so long a warning. I told him his wish was unnecessary, for I would leave him that instant; and so, taking my hat, walked out of doors, desiring Meredith,

whom I saw below, to take care of some things I left, and bring them to my lodgings."

Young Franklin, disgusted with this experience and the fact that he had been unable to find employment with any of the merchants of Philadelphia, after learning that business under Mr. Denham, began to think of going back to Boston to live. He had been away from his family nearly three years, and being twenty-one, his brother could make no claim upon him now. The time which had elapsed since he ran away from Boston was the period required for an ordinary college course, but few students ever have learned more than Benjamin Franklin had picked up in the "university of adversity."

Hugh Meredith came, as requested, bringing the articles the foreman had left at Keimer's. Like nearly every one else who knew Franklin, Hugh had a great regard for him. He called attention to the fact that Keimer was heavily in debt, that he showed poor business management, and that his creditors were already becoming uneasy. The disagreeable old printer was sure to fail and Franklin could step in and take advantage of this by opening a printing office on a sounder basis and under far better management.

HE CONTINUED THE QUARREL.

"But," Franklin demurred, "I have no money."

"My father has a high opinion of you," said Meredith, "and if you will go into partnership with me, I am sure he will advance the money to set us up. My time will be out with Keimer in the Spring; by that time we may have our press and types in from London. I am sensible I am no workman; if you like it, your skill in the business shall be set against the stock I furnish, and we will share the profits equally."

To this young Franklin agreed. He again made a list of the things required in a printing office and sent to London for them. While he was casting about for work to do meanwhile, Keimer sent him a polite message to the effect that "old friends should not part for a few words, the effect of a sudden passion," and asked the offended foreman to come back. Meredith urged him to do so, as then Franklin could give him more instruction and make him more useful in their own business when they should go in together.

Franklin called on Keimer and found that there was a chance to print some paper money for the Province of New Jersey, which only he

could manage, and that Keimer was afraid Bradford would hire him first and thus secure the desirable contract.

"So I returned," wrote Franklin, "and we went on more smoothly than for some time before. The New Jersey job was obtained. I contrived a copper-plate press for it, the first that had been seen in the country. I cut several ornaments and checks for the bills. We went together to Burlington, where I executed the whole to satisfaction; and he received so large a sum for the work as to be enabled thereby to keep his head above water."

"I contrived a copper-plate press," was Franklin's modest way of mentioning one of his many inventions. In the same way that young Franklin was the first to make moulds and cast the type for his employer to use in printing, he was the first to do copper-plate engraving of the most exacting sort for the printing of paper money. Franklin did his best for his old employer, though he had treated him so badly for the mere purpose of getting rid of him. He had not a petty or grudging spirit, and it proved better for him, in a business way, to treat Keimer generously, for he formed valuable and life-long

friendships while working for his employer in New Jersey.

Shortly after their return from Burlington the type and other things for their new printing office arrived from London. Franklin and Meredith left Keimer's together, with his consent, before he heard they were going to be his rivals in business.

Over forty years afterward, Franklin, then a successful statesman and diplomat, referred tenderly to the pleasure he and Meredith took in going into business for themselves:

"We found a house to hire near the market, and took it. To lessen the rent, which was then but twenty-four pounds a year, tho' I have since known it to let for seventy, we took in Thomas Godfrey, a glazier, and his family, who were to pay a considerable part of it to us, and we to board with them.

"We had scarce opened our letters (type) and put our press in order before George House, an acquaintance of mine, brought to us a countryman whom he had met in the street inquiring for a printer. All our cash was now expended in the variety of particulars we had been obliged to procure, and this countryman's five shillings,

being our first fruits, and coming so seasonably, gave me more pleasure than any crown (about $1.25) I have since earned; and the gratitude I felt toward House has made me often more ready than perhaps I would otherwise have been to assist young beginners."

Franklin, though he became one of the world's most illustrious inventors, philosophers, statesmen and diplomats, was always proud of his trade and liked to sign his name "B. Franklin, Printer," just as Stephen Girard, the richest man of his day, affixed his business, "Mariner and Merchant," after his name. Only the small man "gets above his business."

CHAPTER XI

"B. Franklin and H. Meredith"

During the autumn before he left Keimer's employ, young Franklin associated twelve of the most intellectual young men of his acquaintance together into a club named the "Junto," which met Friday evenings. Each member was re-

quired to declare from his heart that he loved mankind, and that he believed no man should be harmed in body, name or goods because of his opinions or creed. Every member, also, should be able to say that he loved truth for truth's sake, that he would seek truth, and when he found it he would make it known to others.

Those twelve young men discussed the widest range of questions. Here are only a few of them:

"Have you met with anything in the author you last read remarkable or suitable to be communicated to the Junto, particularly in history, morality, poetry, physics, travels, mechanic arts, or other parts of knowledge?"

"What new story have you lately heard, agreeable for telling in conversation?"

"What unhappy effects of intemperance have you lately observed or heard, or any other vice or folly?"

"Do you think of anything at present in which the Junto may be serviceable to mankind, to their country, to their friends, or to themselves?"

"Have you lately observed any encroachment on the just liberties of the people?"

"How may smoky chimneys be cured?"

"Why does the flame of a candle tend upwards in a spire?"

"Is the emission of paper money safe?"

"What is the reason that men of the greatest knowledge are not the most happy?"

"Can any one particular form of government suit all mankind?"

In answering some of these queries, like "How may smoky chimneys be cured?" and "Why does the flame of a candle tend upwards in a spire?" Franklin developed the Franklin stove and invented his lamp burner. He also printed his discussion of the paper money question which made a great stir in the colonies, for there was no one found who could answer it satisfactorily. About forty years after the founding of this little club of truth-seekers the American Philosophical Society was organized. This society still flourishes and wise men came from all the civilized nations of the world to Philadelphia in 1906, two hundred years from the date of Franklin's birth, to do honor to the memory of the studious, observing youth of twenty-one who started that earnest little "Junto," in 1728.

Young Franklin was, what most so-called philosophers are not, a shrewd man of affairs. He turned the Junto to account in a business way. After describing the first members of their mutual improvement club, he wrote:

"But my giving this account of it here is to show something of the interest I had, every one of these exerting themselves in recommending business to us. Breintnal particularly procured us, from the Quakers, the printing of forty sheets of their history, the rest being done by Keimer; and upon this we worked exceedingly hard, for the price was low. I composed (set type) of it a sheet a day, and Meredith worked it off at press; it was often eleven at night, and sometimes later, before I had finished my distribution (of the type set up) for the next day's work, for the little jobs sent in by our other friends now and then put us back But so determined I was to continue doing a sheet a day of the folio, that one night when, having imposed my forms, I thought my day's work over, one of them by accident was broken, and two pages reduced to 'pi' (a mixed up mess of type). I immediately distributed and composed it over again before I went to bed; and this industry,

visible to our neighbors, began to give us character and credit; particularly, I was told, that mention being made of the new printing office at the merchants' Every Night Club, the general opinion was that it must fail, there being already two printers in the place, Keimer and Bradford; but Dr. Baird gave a contrary opinion. 'For the industry of that Franklin,' said he, 'is superior to anything I ever saw of the kind; I see him at work when I go home from club, and he is at work again before his neighbors are out of bed.'

"This struck the rest, and we soon after had offers from one of them to supply us with stationery; but as yet we did not choose to engage in the shop business."

Of course, old Keimer was not pleased when he learned that Franklin and Meredith had set up another printing office in competition with his. As "rats forsake a sinking ship," George Webb, another of Keimer's workmen, who had found a friend to buy his remaining time of Keimer, came to the new firm to hire out. Franklin tells of his own want of discretion:

"We could not then employ him; but I foolishly let him know, as a secret, that I soon in-

tended to begin a newspaper, and might then have work for him. My hopes of success, as I told him, were founded on this, that the then only newspaper, printed by Bradford, was a paltry thing, wretchedly managed, no way entertaining, and yet was profitable to him. I therefore thought a good paper would scarcely fail of good encouragement.

"I requested Webb not to mention it: but he told it to Keimer, who immediately, to be beforehand with me, published proposals for printing one himself, on which Webb was to be employed."

Perhaps Franklin had this experience in mind when he wrote, as "Poor Richard," the maxim: "Three can keep a secret if two are dead." But the active member of the firm of "B. Franklin and H. Meredith" was ready to cope with his old employer and enemy. Instead of starting his paper at once, he joined forces with Bradford, and made the "Mercury" interesting and even entertaining for the first time in its history. Franklin did this in the form of "pieces of entertainment" contributed under the name of the "Busy Body." This correspondence was something after the order of the letters of "Silence

Dogood" to the "New England Courant," his brother's newspaper. But the "Busy Body" had a more definite object in view than "Goody Dogood"—that of ridiculing Keimer and his paper, which bore the long, high-sounding name of "The Universal Instructor in All Arts and Science and the Pennsylvania Gazette!" This weekly journal was, if possible, more dull and vapid than Bradford's "Mercury" before young Franklin began to contribute to it.

Keimer's "Instructor" worried along weekly, and weakly, most of the time for nine months, when it had only ninety subscribers. It was with a significant smile that the rising young journalist bought Keimer's paper "for a trifle" —the old printer had spited himself and done Franklin a good turn by starting the paper and selling it at a great loss to himself.

Franklin dropped the long title and called the paper "The Pennsylvania Gazette." This was in 1729. It rapidly became the greatest newspaper south of New York, and is still published weekly under the name of "The Saturday Evening Post."

Before the "Gazette" had been running a month under its new management it contained

the following announcement, which must have astonished the public, for no one had thought of receiving a newspaper oftener than once a week:

"Instead of publishing a *whole sheet once* a week, as the first undertaker (!), Keimer, engaged to do in his proposals, we shall continue to publish a *half sheet twice* a week, which amounts to the same thing; only it is easier to us, and we think it will be more acceptable to our readers, as their entertainment will by this means become more frequent."

But Franklin, as usual, was in advance of his time. The wiseacres shook their heads. A semi-weekly was setting the popular pace at a too rapid gait; so the young journalist, after issuing it twice a week for several weeks, was obliged to change it back to a weekly.

This story told of the young publisher at this time reflects credit upon his discretion and character:

"While Franklin was struggling along, burdened with debts, a respected neighbor came in with an article which he said would make a stir, give the newspaper life, and pay well.

" 'I am glad to have something to give the

paper life and make it entertaining,' replied Franklin, 'I will read this as soon as I can.'

"'I will call to-morrow,' said the man of influence. 'I know you will like it—it is a needed rebuke.'

"When young Franklin came to read the article, he found it full of bitterness and ridicule—written in a spirit of revenge. He felt sure that, if printed, it would be read by those interested in such personal attacks. It would make people laugh, but he decided not to publish it because it would do a wrong to a certain person.

"He needed money badly. He went to the baker's and bought a two-penny roll, ate it in his office and slept the sleep of the just.

"Next day the wealthy citizen called and asked:

"'Have you read it?'

"'Yes, sir.'

"'What do you think of it?'

"'That I cannot use it, sir.'

"'Why not?' said the man, astonished.

"'I am not sure but that it would do a wrong to the person you have attacked. There are always two sides to a story. I should not like such things printed about me.'

" 'But you will lose the money, young man, have you thought of that?'

"Young Franklin drew himself up, in the strength of his young manhood, and answered slowly and firmly:

" 'I am sorry to say, sir, that I think the article is scurrilous and defamatory. But I have been at a loss, on account of my poverty, whether to reject it or not. I, therefore, put it to this issue. At night when my work was done I bought a two-penny loaf, on which I supped heartily. Then wrapping myself in my great coat, I slept soundly on the floor until morning, when another loaf and a mug of water afforded a pleasant breakfast.

" 'Now, sir, since I can live very comfortably in this manner, why should I prostitute my press to personal hatred or party passion for a more luxurious living?' "

The next time New Jersey wanted paper money printed, it was Franklin, not Keimer, who was sent for. This job paid him so well that he ventured to take his press with him and made this half humorous apology:

"The printer hopes the irregular publication of this paper will be excused a few times by his

town readers, in consideration of his being at Burlington with the press, laboring for the public good, to *make money more plentiful.*"

Surely that was as good an excuse as he could have offered for the offense. In the hands of such a manager the "Gazette" flourished and throve. Franklin was a born advertiser, and wrote a great many advertisements to promote his paper, as well as for his patrons. He also established the custom of requiring subscribers to pay in advance, for half the year at least. This saved great expense, time and patience, and the people appreciated the "Gazette" more after paying for it. Franklin himself gives good reasons for its prosperity:

"Our first papers made a different appearance from any before in the Province; a better type, and better printed; but some spirited remarks of my writing, on the dispute, then going on between Governor Burnet and the Massachusetts Assembly, struck the principal people, occasioned the paper and the manager of it to be much talked of, and in a few weeks brought them all to be our subscribers.

"Their example was followed by many, and our number went on growing continually. This

was one of the first good effects of my having learnt a little to scribble; another was, that the leading men, seeing a newspaper now in the hands of one who could also handle a pen, thought it convenient (proper) to oblige and encourage me. Bradford still printed the votes and laws and other public business. He had printed an address of the House in a coarse, blundering manner; we reprinted it elegantly and correctly, and sent one to every member. They were sensible of the difference, it strengthened the hands of our friends in the House, and they voted us their printers for the year ensuing.

"Mr. Vernon, about this time, put me in mind of the debt I owed him, but did not press me. I wrote an ingenuous (frank) letter of acknowledgment, craved his forbearance a little longer, which he allowed me, and as soon as I was able, I paid the principal with interest and many thanks; so that erratum was in some degree corrected.

"But now another difficulty came upon me which I had never the least reason to expect. Mr. Meredith's father, who was to have paid for our printing house, according to the expectations given me, was able to advance only one hundred

pounds currency, which had been paid; and a hundred more was due to the merchant who grew impatient and sued us all. We gave bail, but saw that if the money could not be raised in time the suit must come to a judgment and execution, and our hopeful prospects must, with us, be ruined, as the press and letters (type) must be sold for payment, perhaps at half price.

"In this distress two friends, whose kindness I have never forgotten, nor ever shall forget while I can remember anything, came to me separately, unknown to each other, and, without any application from me, offering each of them to advance me all the money that should be necessary to enable me to take the whole business upon myself, if that should be practicable; but they did not like my continuing the partnership with Meredith, who, as they said, was often seen drunk in the streets, and playing at low games in alehouses, much to our discredit.

"I told them I could not propose a separation while any prospect remained of the Meredith fulfilling their part of our agreement, because I thought myself under great obligations to them for what they had done, and would do if they could; but, if they finally failed in their perform-

ance, and our partnership must be dissolved, I should then think myself at liberty to accept the assistance of my friends."

Young Franklin's first business venture was beset in the same manner as that of young Lincoln after he had bought a store with William Berry's money—that is, a drunken partner. Both Franklin and Lincoln were men of strong temperance principles, in times and places where it was not yet a moral question. It seemed the irony of fate that these two "righteous souls" should have been vexed in this way. Young Franklin took a manly, charitable view of Hugh Meredith's bad habits. The father had promised to advance the money hoping that partnership with such an industrious, thrifty, agreeable young fellow as Benjamin Franklin would be the saving of his son.

After letting the matter rest a while, Franklin said to his partner:

"If your father is not satisfied with me I will resign and go about my business."

"No," said Meredith, "he has been disappointed in his money and is really unable to pay the rest. I do not wish to see him distressed any more. I am not fitted to be a printer. I

was brought up a farmer and it was foolish of me, at thirty, to try to learn a new trade. I have friends in North Carolina. I will go down there on a farm. If you will assume the company's debts and return to my father the hunderd pounds ($500) he has advanced, pay my little debts and give me thirty pounds ($150) and a new saddle, I will give up this business and leave it all in your hands."

"I agreed to this," says Franklin, "and the year after, when Meredith was settled in Carolina, he wrote me two long letters about that Southern country, its soil and climate, and when I printed them in our paper, they seemed to please the public."

When relieved of his partner the young printer, wishing not to be partial, went to his two generous friends, accepted half the amount from each, paid the company's debts, advertised the dissolving of the partnership and carried on the business in his own name.

Through Mr. Andrew Hamilton, the giver of the State House, "B. Franklin, Printer," was awarded the contract for printing paper money for Delaware, and "the printing of the laws and votes for that government." Then he opened a

I WAS NOT ABOVE MY BUSINESS.

stationer's shop also, with "blanks of all sorts, the correctest that ever appeared among us," also paper, parchments, chapmen's (dealers') books, etc.

"I began now gradually to pay off the debt I was under for the printing house. In order to secure my credit and character as a tradesman, I took care not only to be in *reality* industrious and frugal, but to *avoid all appearances to the contrary.* I dressed plainly; I was seen at no places of idle diversion. I never went out fishing or shooting; a book, indeed, sometimes debauched me from my work, but that was seldom, was private and gave no scandal; and, to show that I was not above my business, I sometimes brought home the paper I purchased at the stores thro' the streets on a wheelbarrow.

"Thus, being esteemed an industrious, thriving young man, and paying duly for what I bought, the merchants who imported stationery solicited my custom; others proposed supplying me with books, and I went on swimmingly.

"In the meantime, Keimer's credit and business declining daily, he was at last forced to sell his printing house to satisfy his creditors. He

went to Barbados and there lived some years in very poor circumstances.

"There remained now no competitor with me at Philadelphia, but the old one, Bradford, who was rich and easy, did a little printing, now and then, by straggling hands, but was not very anxious about the business. However, as he kept the post office, it was imagined that he had better opportunities of obtaining news; his paper was thought a better distributor of advertisements than mine and therefore had many more, which was a profitable thing to him, and a disadvantage to me."

"Not slothful in business" was young Franklin's rule of conduct while establishing his printing house and his reputation. He must have developed at this time the maxim he afterward printed as "Poor Richard's:"

"Drive thy business; let not that drive thee."

CHAPTER XII

Correcting a "Great Erratum"

Benjamin Franklin had the modern newspaper spirit. Instead of drawing from the musty volumes of "Chambers," as his competitors did, for matter to fill his columns when there was no news, he wrote witty, gossipy letters from "Alice Addertongue," "Bob Brief," and others whose names remind the reader of the characters in "The School for Scandal."

One week a letter appeared from a supposed "Constant Reader" requesting "Mr. Printer:" "Pray, let the prettiest creature in this place know (by publishing this) that if it was not for her affectation she would be absolutely irresistible."

The foxy publisher knew this would bring replies, and the next week's issue of the "Gazette" contained denials from *six* of the "prettiest creatures" in town!

When no other device occurred to him, Ben-

jamin Franklin printed jokes against himself to amuse his readers. Once he tripped and fell into a tar barrel, and his account of the accident was full of puns, which had not then fallen into disrepute as "the lowest form of wit." Yet mere punning is not so obnoxious as the constant use of slang—repeating a pet word or phrase on all occasions—until it becomes pointless and exceedingly tiresome.

"A man without a wife is but half a man," said Franklin, as "Poor Richard." Later he spoke of the unmarried man as "the odd half of a pair of scissors." After buying Meredith out, the young publisher, being twenty-four years old, began to think of marriage. He relates his experiences in his usual candid way:

"I had hitherto continued to board with Godfrey, who lived in part of my house with his wife and children, and had one side of the shop for his glazier's business, tho' he worked little, being always absorbed in mathematics.

"Mrs. Godfrey projected a match for me with a relation's daughter, took opportunities of bringing us often together, till a serious courtship on my part ensued, the girl being in herself very deserving. The old folks encouraged me by

continual invitations to supper, and by leaving us together till at length it was time to explain. Mrs. Godfrey managed our little treaty. I let her know that I expected as much money with the girl as would pay off my remaining debt for the printing house, which I believe was not then above a hundred pounds ($500)."

The now foreign custom of requiring a dowry with the bride prevailed in the Philadelphia of Franklin's day. Mrs. Godfrey's relatives refused to consider the printer's proposal, "and therefore," said Franklin, "I was forbidden the house, and the daughter shut up. Whether this was a real change of sentiment, or only artifice, on a supposition of our being too far engaged in affection to retract, and therefore that we should steal a marriage (elope), which would leave them at liberty to give or withhold what they pleased, I know not; but I suspected the latter, resented it, and went there no more.

"Mrs. Godfrey brought me afterward some favorable accounts of their disposition, and would have drawn me on again; but I declared absolutely my resolution to have nothing more to do with that family. This was resented by the Godfreys; we differed, and they removed, leav-

ing me the whole house, and I resolved to take no more inmates.

"But this affair turned my thoughts to marriage. A friendly correspondence, as neighbors and old acquaintances, had continued between me and Miss Read's family, who all had a regard for me from the time of my first lodging in their house. I was often invited there and consulted in their affairs, wherein I sometimes was of service.

"Our mutual affection was revived, but there were now great objections to our union. The match (marriage of Miss Read to Rogers) was indeed looked upon as invalid (not binding), a preceding wife being said to be living in England; but this could not easily be proved, because of the distance; and tho' there was a report of his death, it was not certain. Then, tho' it should be true, he had left many debts—which his successor might be called upon to pay.

"We ventured, however, over all these difficulties and I took her to wife, September 1, 1730. Thus I corrected that great erratum as well as I could."

In his "Autobiography" he bore witness to the devotion of his faithful helpmeet:

"We have an English proverb that says, 'He that would thrive must ask his wife.' It was lucky for me that I had one as much disposed to industry and frugality as myself. She assisted me cheerfully in my business, folding and stitching pamphlets, tending shop, purchasing old linen rags for the paper makers, etc., etc.

"We kept no idle servants, our table was plain and simple, our furniture of the cheapest. For instance, my breakfast was, a long time, bread and milk (no tea), and I ate it out of a twopenny earthen porringer with a pewter spoon. But mark how luxury will enter families and make progress, in spite of principle: being called one morning to breakfast, I found it in a china bowl, with a spoon of silver! They had been bought for me, without my knowledge, by my wife, and had cost her the enormous sum of three-and-twenty shillings, for which she had no other excuse or apology to make but that she thought *her* husband deserved a silver spoon and a china bowl as well as any of the neighbors. This was the first appearance of plate and china in our house."

For the Junto young Franklin wrote, as a

tribute to his wife, a "song" of eight stanzas, from which here are two:

"Of their Chloes and Phyllises poets may prate,
I sing of my plain country Joan,
These twelve years my wife, still the joy of my life—
Blest day that I made her my own!

"Some faults have we all, and so has my Joan,
But then they're exceedingly small;
And now I'm grown used to them, so like my own,
I scarcely can see them at all."

Franklin relates in simple form how he came to found the first circulating library in America, and later the Philadelphia Library:

"About this time, our club meeting, not at a tavern, but in a little room of Mr. Grace's (a member of the Junto), set apart for that purpose, a proposition was made by me that since our books were often referred to in our disquisitions upon the queries, it might be convenient to us to have them altogether where we met, that upon occasion they might be consulted; and by

thus clubbing our books to a common library, we should, while we liked to keep them together, have each of us the advantage of using the books of all the other members, which would be nearly as beneficial as if each owned the whole.

"It was liked and agreed to, and we filled one end of the room with such books as we could best spare. The number was not so great as we expected; and tho' they had been of great use, yet some inconveniences occurring for want of due care of them, the collection, after about a year, was separated, and each took his books home again.

"And now I set on foot my first project of a public nature, that for a subscription library. This was the mother of all the North American subscription libraries, now so numerous. It is become a great thing itself, and is continually increasing. These libraries have improved the general conversation of the Americans, made the common *tradesmen* and *farmers* as intelligent as most *gentlemen* from other countries, and perhaps contributed in some degree to the stand so generally made throughout the colonies in defense of their privileges."

Franklin wrote these words before the Revo-

lution. A few years later he would have stated that the libraries had done much for the liberties of the country. *Liber* is the Latin for book—why should not books have much to do with *liberty?*

About this time young Franklin spent much thought upon the proper course of life and condensed a dozen rules of living, which remind one of the "Rules of Behaviour and Civility," which young George Washington copied and learned soon after this time, in a private school at Fredericksburg, Virginia.

> Temperance—Eat not to dullness; drink not to elevation.
>
> Silence—Speak not but what may benefit others or yourself; avoid trifling conversation.
>
> Order—Let all things have their places; let each part of your business have its time.
>
> Resolution—Resolve to perform what you ought; perform without fail what you resolve.
>
> Frugality—Make no expense but to do good to others or yourself; that is, *waste nothing.*

Industry—Lose no time; be always employed in something useful; cut off all unnecessary actions.

Sincerity—Use no harmful deceit; think innocently and justly; and if you speak, speak accordingly.

Justice—Wrong none by doing injuries, or omitting the benefits that are your duty.

Moderation—Avoid extremes; forbear resenting injuries as much as you think they deserve.

Cleanliness—Tolerate no uncleanness of body, clothes, or habitation.

Tranquillity—Be not disturbed at trifles, or at accidents common or unavoidable.

Humility—Imitate Jesus and Socrates.

In his anxiety to form habits of right thinking and living, Franklin drew up a table of all these virtues and marked it every night according to his conduct for that day.

He also laid out his work for the day as follows:

MORNING The *Question.* What good shall I do this day?	5 6 7	Rise, wash, and address *Powerful Goodness!* Contrive day's business, and take the resolution of the day; prosecute the present study, and breakfast.
	8 9 10 11	Work.
NOON	12 1	Read, or look over my accounts, and dine.
AFTERNOON	2 3 4 5	Work.
EVENING The *Question.* What good have I done to-day?	6 7 8 9	Put things in their places. Supper. Music or diversion, or conversation. Examination of the day.
NIGHT	10 11 12 1 2 3 4	Sleep.

Of this daily schedule he wrote:

"I entered upon the execution of this plan for self-examination, and continued it, with occasional intermission, for some time. I was surprised to find myself so much fuller of faults than I had imagined; but I had the satisfaction of seeing them diminish."

CHAPTER XIII

"Poor Richard"

When Mrs. Godfrey departed from the house of young Franklin in deep resentment, because he refused to be "drawn on again" to play his part in her little matrimonial scheme, she took her husband with her. Bad as it was to be deprived of a good housekeeper, the loss of the man meant even more to the aspiring young publisher. For Thomas Godfrey was a "philomath," who calculated times and seasons, moon changes, and eclipses of all kinds for the almanac which, until then, had been published by

"B. Franklin and H. Meredith." Thomas dutifully took part in his wife's quarrel, shared in her wrath, and took away his almanac for Bradford to print.

The almanac was an ever-present book of reference in the Colonial household. It stood next to the Bible in importance, as it seemed to give a certain direction from above to the affairs of every-day life. Hanging near the fireplace, it was consulted and discussed by all the family old enough to read and understand. It took the place of the present-day magazine and calendar —often that of the modern newspaper. Current notes and family data were written, month by month, on the margins of its precious pages, making it the household record, which, being preserved year after year for generations, became the family history.

Therefore, whether people could afford to have "The Pilgrim's Progress" or not, they felt that they must own an almanac. If they did not possess the necessary sixpence in money, for money was scarce in those days when women went "trading," instead of "shopping," for household necessities, it was bought with stockings or mittens, or, in the absence of home-knit articles, the

copper teakettle was sometimes sacrificed to procure the important annual.

For the printer it furnished a good kind of typesetting to keep at hand when other work was slack. Therefore the loss of Thomas Godfrey, glazier and philomath, was a serious blow to the ambitions of the rising publisher. It would have been well-nigh fatal if Benjamin Franklin had not been a young man of ready resources. At seventeen he had created the character of "Silence Dogood" for the purpose of making his brother's newspaper more readable, and, during the ten years that followed, he had consistently assumed a number of characters over such pen-names as "The Busy Body," "Anthony Afterwit," and so on. In that way he had passed through a period of preparation for his next step, which, though taken to meet a business emergency, proved even more important than his greatest discovery and most useful invention—the creation of "Poor Richard."

When he first went to school, Benjamin was lacking in arithmetic, but while he was working as his brother's apprentice he studied by himself to remedy that defect. So successful had he been that he now attempted the most difficult

astronomical calculations for an almanac which he proposed to print. Why not? Of course it would not do to publish it as his own work. He had found that such things have much more weight when printed in the name of an unknown writer. So young Franklin decided to be his own philomath, but over another name.

What should the name be? There had been a successful English almanac maker in the preceding century, Richard Saunder or Saunders, whose name Franklin decided to use instead of his own. There was no deception in that, for those who had heard about Richard Saunders would know that he had been dead a long time. It is argued that Franklin's ideas were not original because he assumed the name of a former philomath. But that would be like saying Shakespeare's "Hamlet" and "Richard the Third" were mere imitations because Prince Hamlet and King Richard had actually lived. The resemblance between young Franklin's almanac and that of the seventeenth century ceases with the name.

Franklin used his advertising instinct in promoting his novel almanac. He knew human nature, and the disposition of his rival, Titan

Leeds, so well that he touched him on a sore spot and set him in a towering rage which he vented on him in his almanacs. These were of long standing and wide circulation, and announced "Poor Richard" to all his own readers, who became interested at once to secure copies of Franklin's almanac to see what it all meant, and having some sense of humor, soon found themselves laughing, with Franklin, at the weakness and want of sense manifested by his rival.

Franklin, in revealing the character of Richard Saunders, made him refer frankly to his poverty and signing himself "poor"—hence his title, "Poor Richard." He treated the traits of his hero somewhat as Addison developed the charming character of Sir Roger de Coverley, only "Poor Richard" was Sir Roger translated from an English gentleman to the circumstances of the humblest people in colonial America. His first introduction to the Almanac of 1733, suggests the "Spectator" "reduced to its lowest terms:"

> "COURTEOUS READER:
>
> "I might in this place attempt to gain thy favor by declaring that I write almanacs with no other view than that of

the public good, but in this I should not be sincere; and men are nowadays too wise to be deceived by pretenses, how specious soever. The plain truth of the matter is, I am excessive poor, and my wife, good woman, is, I tell her, excessive proud; she cannot bear, she says, to sit spinning in her shift of tow, while I do nothing but gaze at the stars; and has threatened more than once to burn all my books and rattling traps (as she calls my instruments) if I do not make some profitable use of them for the good of my family. The printer has offered me some considerable share of the profits, and I have thus begun to comply with my dame's desire."

Then Franklin turned his attention to Titan Leeds, his rival philomath. Assuming a patronizing tone, he professes great friendship for his competitor, as though he, Richard Saunders, had been kept from writing almanacs for years for fear of interfering with Leeds's business. But now that Titan is to remain on earth so short a time "Poor Richard's" scruples are at an end. Then he goes on to predict the death of Titan Leeds, in true almanac fashion. Why should not an up-to-date star-gazer be able

to do this as accurately as the ordinary almanac maker to prophesy months ahead the state of the weather? Of the sudden death of his chief competitor, "Poor Richard" wrote:

"He dies by my calculation, made at his request, October 17, 1733, 3 ho., 29m., P. M., at the very instant of the ☌ of ☉ and ☿. By his own calculation he will survive until the 26th of the same month.

"This small difference between us we have disputed whenever we have met these nine years past; but at length he is inclinable to agree with my judgment. Which of us is most exact, a little time will now determine."

Just as calendars and year books appear a few months in advance nowadays, so the quaint almanacs of two hundred years ago were sometimes published by September or October of the year before. The new almanac, for 1733, was delayed and did not appear until December, 1732, several months late. Of course, the prediction concerning Leeds made a great sensation and occasioned no little nervousness on the part of the man the exact hour of whose death had been so boldly prophesied. It was strange that Titan's friends did not tell him his rival was

making game of him. Perhaps they did, but the man seemed to think it was an unholy subject to joke about, and his indignation got the better of his sense of humor, if he had any. But, though he had nearly a year to reflect, Leeds devoted the introduction to his own almanac for the year 1734 to a reply to what he considered an outrageous attack upon himself, *dated the very hour he was to have died,* according to Franklin's reckoning.

"Kind Reader:

"Perhaps it may be expected that I should say something concerning an almanac printed for the year 1733, said to be writ by Poor Richard, or Richard Saunders, who for want of other matter, predicts my death to be the 17th of October, 1733. And this precise predicter, who predicts to a minute, proposes to succeed me in writing of almanacs. But notwithstanding his false prediction, I have, by the mercy of God, lived to write a diary for the year 1734, and to publish the folly and ignorance of this presumptuous author.

"Poor Richard, or Richard Saunders, was pleased to tell his readers:

That by my own calculation I shall survive until the 26th, of the said month (October), which is as untrue as the former, for I do not pretend to that knowledge, altho' he has usurpt the knowledge of the Almighty herein, and manifested himself a fool and a liar,

"And by the mercy of God I have lived to survive this conceited scribbler's day and minute whereon he has predicted my death; and as I have supplied my country with almanacs for three seven years by past, to general satisfaction, so perhaps I may live to write when his performances are dead. *Thus much from your annual friend, Titan Leeds, October 17, 1733, 3 ho. 33 min. P. M.*"

This reply was what Franklin had awaited, laughing in his sleeve, hoping for, only it was even more than he could have expected. It attracted everybody's attention to "Poor Richard's Almanac," and made business very good for the printer of that humorous pamphlet.

Franklin seems to have found out what Leeds was to publish in reply to his prediction of the year before, for he answers it in his preface to "Poor Richard's Almanac" for 1734, which ap-

peared about the same time as Leeds's abusive tirade:

> "I had intended to be with him, in his last moments, to receive his last embrace, to close his eyes, and do the duty of a friend in performing the last offices to the departed.
>
> "There is, however (and I cannot speak it without sorrow), there is the strongest probability that my dear friend is no more; for there appears in his name, as I am assured, an almanac for the year 1734; in which I am treated in a very gross and unhandsome manner, in which I am called a false predicter, an ignorant, a conceited scribbler, a fool and a liar.
>
> "Mr. Leeds was too well bred to use any man so indecently and so scurrilously, and moreover his esteem and affection for me was extraordinary: so that it is to be feared that pamphlet may be only a contrivance of somebody or other who hopes, perhaps, to sell two or three years' almanacs still, by the sole force and virtue of Mr. Leeds' name.
>
> His valuable qualifications, with many others, so much endeared him to me,

that although it should be so, that, contrary to my prediction and his own, he might yet possibly be alive. Yet my loss of honor as a prognosticator cannot afford me so much mortification as his life, health and safety would give me joy and satisfaction.

"I am,

"Courteous and kind reader,

"Your poor friend and servant,

"R. SAUNDERS."

"OCTOBER 30, 1733."

Could that chuckling young philomath have thought of this fulsome flattery when he put this maxim into a later almanac:

"Here comes Glib-tongue, who can outflatter a dedication, and lie like ten epitaphs?"

Whether he had his own proverbs in mind or not, "B. Franklin, Printer," did not forget that of the Wise Man, "A soft answer turneth away wrath." The rival almanac writer's "epitaphy" soothed the sore head and wounded heart of Leeds to such an extent that he adverted to "Poor Richard" in his almanac for 1735 in mollified language, but sneering at that worthy star-gazer's poverty as confessed by Franklin in the introduction to his almanac for 1734.

The smiles and sneers of Leeds show how Franklin's humor must have been received by people in general. But he persisted, year by year, till he educated the popular mind into a state which has come to be known abroad as "American humor." His work has perhaps been completed by Abraham Lincoln, who made the people understand that it is not improper for the President of the United States to see the bright, humorous side of the bitterest experiences in life. Franklin was too funny for his time. In the most solemn affairs he was sure to see the ludicrous and did not hesitate to express himself, on rare occasions, to the detriment of his own reputation.

Franklin was as much ahead of his time in humor as he was in other respects. Like Lincoln, he was a great story teller, and was often "reminded of a story" which would illustrate a point or clinch an argument. There is an odd anecdote about him, that shows how much he resembled Lincoln in this regard. Franklin did not approve of men being required to own a certain amount of property before they could vote. He felt that it was then the money, not the man, that really did the voting. Here is the way he

tried to prove the absurdity of a man having to be "worth" ten pounds ($50) before he could have the right of suffrage:

"A man had a jackass worth ten pounds. While that jackass lived the man voted. After the jackass died the man could not vote again. Who was it that voted, then, the man or the jackass?"

But it is their heart-humor that has made his maxims household words in a hundred languages and dialects all around the globe, and his thrift-proverbs have done more to make America what it is to-day than any other single agency. In his "Autobiography" Franklin wrote of his anxiety to make his almanac benefit and educate the people along sensible lines:

"Observing that it was generally read, scarce any neighborhood in the Province being without it, I considered it as a proper vehicle for conveying instruction among the common people who bought scarcely any other books; I therefore filled all the little spaces between the remarkable days in the calendar with proverbial sentences, chiefly such as inculcated industry and frugality as a means of procuring wealth and thereby securing virtue; it being more difficult for a man

in want to act always honestly, as, to use here one of these proverbs, *'It is hard for an empty sack to stand upright.'*"

Franklin was careful not to claim to have originated all the maxims of "Poor Richard." He stated once that "not a tenth part of this wisdom was my own, but rather the gleanings I had made of all ages and nations." Yet he had, with his own bubbling wit and whimsical humor, condensed the wisdom of the ages, with many a quip and twist and turn, and made them fit the life and speech of the American people.

It is impossible, of course, to give one-tenth of "Poor Richard's" best maxims here. They have the peculiar Franklin "tang" just as true "Lincoln stories" are known by a certain heart-charm which is impossible to describe, yet easy to recognize:

"Onions can make even heirs and widows weep."

"Necessity has no law; I know some attorneys of the same."

"Mary's mouth costs her nothing, for she never opens it but at others' expense."

Many of Franklin's maxims were full of satire and reflections upon the assumptions and weak-

nesses of men and women—like that about "necessity" and "lawyers" "knowing no law." "Poor Richard's" maxims were more than merely humorous. The "Sayings of Poor Richard" have become so ingrained in the everyday talk of the world that few persons have any idea that the household words that come so "trippingly on the tongue" were first written in their familiar form by a young Philadelphia printer nearly two hundred years ago. Here are only a few of those that have made America and the whole world richer, in more ways than one:

"A penny saved is a penny earned."

"Haste makes waste."

"He that goes a-borrowing goes a-sorrowing."

"God helps them that help themselves."

"Lost time is never found again."

"A cat in gloves catches no mice."

"Early to bed and early to rise,
Makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise."

"A word to the wise is *enough*."

"Poor Richard's Almanac," so subtly and whimsically advertised at first, continued with matchless success for twenty-five years, jumped at once to the foremost place among the almanacs of the world, and left Leeds's yearly pamphlets far behind in the race. If Titan had fulfilled his own foolish prediction—to "Live to write when his ('Poor Richard's') performances are dead"—he would still be mooning around the world like the Wandering Jew, for "Poor Richard's" maxims are read and quoted to-day by millions, in many lands and languages, because of their deep human humor and the hearty common sense which makes for prosperity and happiness. But the almanac of Titan Leeds is known only to the few, as a curiosity, because of his blindness in calling his rival "a fool," "liar" and "conceited scribbler," who created "Poor Richard," the first immortal character in American fiction.

CHAPTER XIV

"Many Inventions" and the Doctor's Degrees

It was not "Poor Richard" who wrote "Jack of all trades, master of none," for that saying was not true of Benjamin Franklin. Besides all his other achievements, Franklin's many discoveries, inventions and improvements made him a world benefactor. The people of Philadelphia show many places of interest, saying: "Here such a thing first happened," or "Here such a thing was done for the first time," or "There that great enterprise was started;" and most of these affairs to which Philadelphia points with pride to-day were originated by Benjamin Franklin. Nearly all of the things he did had no connection with his own business, but were expressions of his public spirit and kindness of heart.

Franklin was the greatest example of the practical spirit of America. "What signifies philosophy," he asked, "that does not apply to

some use?" He cared nothing for theories as such, but he took a lively interest in practice. Next to his thrift-maxims and his unceasing labors and influence in behalf of human liberty, his greatest benefit to mankind was what he called "the Pennsylvania Fireplace," but which the people named "the Franklin Stove." For a thousand years people of the old world had warmed themselves by old-fashioned fireplaces, which were little better than the smoky fires in the wigwams of the American Indians. The only superiority in the white man's fireplace was that it was placed at one side and had a chimney. But the smoke did not always go up the chimney. In order to make it ascend they built large chimneys, with capacious fireplaces taking up nearly the whole of one side of the room, and consuming an immense amount of wood from which most of the heat went up with the smoke, leaving the room cold except within a few feet of the fire.

It is pleasant to read and think about the backlog and the cheerful blaze in the castles of the Old England and the mansions of New England or Old Virginia. But those lordly halls were as cold as barns. People accustomed to the com-

forts of the modern home would find the drafty chill of "mansions and palaces" very disagreeable indeed. Queen Victoria, in her spacious apartments in Windsor Castle, found it almost impossible to be as comfortable as the humblest day laborer in his cosy little cottage or tenement to-day. This great change was due to the ingenuity and good will of young Franklin, for most of his discoveries and inventions were made before he passed middle life.

About the "curing" of "smoky chimneys," young Franklin wrote, "It is strange, methinks, that though chimneys have been for so long in use, the construction should be so little understood till lately that no workman pretended to make one which should carry off all smoke." The "smoke nuisance" was not the only discomfort of the old-fashioned fireplace, according to Franklin. It was likely to have only "two warm seats, one in each corner; but they were sometimes too hot to abide in, and the cold air so nips the backs and heels of those that sit before the fire that they have no comfort till either screens or settles are provided. A moderate quantity of wood on the fire, in so large a hearth, seems but little; and in so strong and cold a draft, warms

but little; so that people are continually laying on more (wood). In short, it is next to impossible to warm a room with such a fireplace."

The trouble with "such a fireplace" was that the larger it was, and the better it carried off the smoke and heat the greater the draft created, and instead of throwing out warm air into the room, it drew in the cold air from outside and those sitting in front of the fire had "chills" in their backs even while the fire was hot enough to scorch their faces and hands.

It is true that there was the German or Dutch stove, like a box or covered brazier, which smoked badly and, as Franklin said about them, "there is no sight of the fire, which in itself is a pleasant thing." He goes on, "I suppose our ancestors never thought of warming rooms to sit in; all they purposed was to have a place to make a fire in, by which they might warm themselves when cold."

In 1742 young Franklin devised the first stove consisting of iron sides, back and top, being open in front, like a fireplace. A flue was arranged in the back which connected with the chimney, carried off the smoke, while the heated sides, back and top of the stove, as well as the smoke-pipe

itself, radiated heat, warming the air in the room instead of being carried, in the form of fierce heat, up the chimney. This movable fireplace was made to burn short pieces of wood and small logs. It could be set up in or near the middle of the room, sending out heat on all sides and saving a great deal of fuel.

Franklin wrote in favor of the "Pennsylvania Fireplace," "Your whole room is equally warm, so that people need not crowd so close round the fire, but may sit near the window, and have the benefit of the light for reading, writing, needlework, etc. They may sit with comfort in any part of the room, which is a very considerable advantage in a large family.

"I suppose, taking a number of families together, that two-thirds, or half the wood, at least, is saved. My common room, I know, is made twice as warm as it used to be, with a quarter of the wood I formerly consumed there."

But all the pecuniary advantage Franklin gained from this world-wide invention was what he saved in fuel. He would accept nothing for his stove. Everybody could use his invention and welcome. He wished his stoves to be made as cheaply as possible, so that the poor might be

benefited and made comfortable by them. He wrote of it:

"Governor Thomas was so pleased with the construction of this stove that he offered to give me a patent for the sole vending of them for a term of years: but I declined it from a principle which has ever weighed with me on such occasions, namely, *that, as we enjoy great advantages from the inventions of others, we should be glad of an opportunity to serve others by any invention of ours; and this we should do freely and generously.*"

But a certain English hardware dealer was not actuated by such a noble motive. Franklin wrote of him, "An ironmonger in London, however, making some small changes, which rather hurt its operation, got a patent for it there, and made, as I was told, a little fortune by it. And this is not the only instance of patents taken out for my inventions by others, tho' not always with the same success, which I never contested, as having no desire of profiting by patents myself, and hating disputes. The use of these fireplaces in very many houses, both of this and the neighboring colonies, has been, and is, a great saving of wood to the inhabitants."

About thirty years later, Franklin modified and improved his stove, constructing the draft on the siphon principle so that the fire was made to draw downward, *consuming its own smoke.* This stove was far more ornamental than the Pennsylvania Fireplace, and was made to burn coal as well as wood.

Another answer to the question about "smoky chimneys," was Franklin's circular draft lamp-burner, which he developed before Argand perfected his famous lamp. In studying the movements of the air he worked out a theory of ventilation within, and of the movements of wind and weather without. Applying the same theories to water, he developed the principle and mapped out the course of the Gulf Stream, which he investigated and verified during his several voyages across the Atlantic.

It has been shown how he improved the printing press, cast the first type in America, devised improvements and checks in copperplate engraving. He also introduced stereotyping and manifold letter copying, worked out a system of shorthand and phonography, and started in to reform English spelling. He improved windmills, carriage wheels and water wheels, and con-

structed a clock with only three wheels, showing the hour, minute and second.

He taught sailors how to keep provisions fresh at sea, studied ocean currents, improved the shape and rigging of ships, and recommended that the hulls be divided into air-tight compartments to prevent their sinking.

He tested the power of ether to make one unconscious of pain, and developed a theory of poison and disease in the air, akin to the present belief in germs, microbes or bacilli. He was greatly interested in balloons and, with others, constructed the most successful flying-machine for a hundred and fifty years.

He completely altered the system of house roofing, built the first fireproof house, by covering the wood with plaster, or a kind of concrete.

His heart went out in kindness to man and beast. He took measures to prevent cruelty to animals, to treat even the Indians kindly, and founded an anti-slavery society. He improved watering troughs for animals as well as soup plates for men. He made bi-focal lenses for spectacles, invented a musical instrument called the "armonica," and perfected an electrical machine.

He founded a library, a college, a newspaper, a magazine, a philosophical society, a hospital, and a fire company, besides planning and organizing street cleaning and lighting, a police department, sidewalks and crossings for Philadelphia, and the first volunteer militia company for Pennsylvania.

Of all his inventions Franklin wrote to a scientist-friend:

"I have no private interest in the reception of my inventions by the world, having never made, nor proposed to make the least profit by any of them." And concerning his discoveries he once wrote: "I have never entered into any controversy in defense of my philosophical opinions. I leave them to take their chance in the world. If they are *right,* truth and experience will support them; if *wrong,* they ought to be refuted and rejected. Disputes are apt to sour one's temper and disturb one's quiet."

In addition to this long list of inventions and innovations and many more, Benjamin Franklin was pronounced by Hume, the English historian, "the first writer in America." Besides all this, he practically "invented" American humor, and promulgated it in his day somewhat as Abraham

Lincoln, a hundred years later, radiated it from the White House.

But the one discovery, or experiment, which took the strongest hold upon the popular mind was his "snatching the lightning from the clouds" to prove that lightning and electricity are one and the same. He had perfected an electrical apparatus for the purpose of experimenting. He learned by experience that death by electricity should be painless, and therefore advocated putting criminals to death by electrocution instead of hanging. In this as in his belief in peace—"There never was a good war, or a bad peace," he made "Poor Richard" say—he was so far in advance of his time that, in several vital questions, America has not "caught up" with Benjamin Franklin yet! He gave this account of one of his electrical experiments:

"Two nights ago, being about to kill a turkey by the shock from two large glass jars containing as much electrical fire as forty common phials, I inadvertently took the whole through my own arms and body, by receiving the fire from the united top with one hand, while the other held a chain connected with the outsides of both jars.

"The company present (whose talking to me

and to one another, I suppose, occasioned my inattention to what I was about) say that the flash was very great, and the crack as loud as a pistol; yet, my senses being instantly gone, I neither saw the one nor heard the other; nor did I feel the stroke on my hand.

"I felt what I know not how well to describe—a universal blow throughout my whole body from head to foot, which seemed within as well as without; after which the first thing I took notice of was a violent, quick shaking of my body, which gradually remitting, my sense as gradually returned."

Even after this dangerous, shocking experience he could not help joking. As soon as he became conscious and saw what had happened, he exclaimed: "Well, I meant to kill a *turkey,* and instead I nearly killed a *goose!*"

Franklin believed that lightning and electricity are the same, years before he was able to prove it. There were many obstacles in his way, of which the worst was the bigoted antagonism of the people against any innovation upon the customs and thought of the ages. In these days of inventions every one is eager to see and test a new discovery, but this was not always so. In

the Middle Ages great inventors like those of to-day would, without doubt, have been burned at the stake, for presumption and witchcraft.

It is related that two men who had constructed a successful flying-machine which landed near Lyons, France, centuries ago, narrowly escaped death at the hands of the frightened and maddened people for working magic. The story of Galileo's suffering, because of his theory that the earth moves around the sun, is well known. Gutenberg, the inventor of printing, narrowly escaped death at the hands of an infuriated mob because the people, from the king and archbishop down, could not understand how the pages of the first printed Bibles could be exactly like the same pages in other Bibles, for they had always been done by hand. Gutenberg had great difficulty in convincing the crowd which gathered around his house that his printing press was not a magic contrivance and that all his Bibles were not printed by the devil!

This violent opposition to anything new and strange was not confined to matters of religion or superstition. The first man to wear a silk or "stove-pipe" hat in the streets of London was mobbed by an enraged crowd, the offensive hat

was destroyed, and the foolhardy wearer's clothes were torn to tatters so that he barely escaped with his life.

Benjamin Franklin himself had observed and experienced the unreasoning rage of the neighbors against vaccination. Because the most distinguished preacher in Boston, Cotton Mather, had adopted the (then) new theory of "inoculation" to prevent smallpox, a hand grenade, or small bomb, was thrown into his study. Fortunately the minister saw the deadly missile in time to throw it out of the window before it exploded, and saved his own life as well as of his family, and his house from being wrecked.

Franklin's second son, little Francis, had died of smallpox. The story was circulated that the child had been vaccinated, and to allay the indignation that prevailed among the people, the father made the following announcement in the "Pennsylvania Gazette" for December 13, 1736:

> "Understanding 'tis a current report that my son Francis, who died lately of smallpox, had it by inoculation, and being desired to satisfy the public in that particular, inasmuch as

some people are, by that report (joined with others of the like kind and perhaps equally groundless), deterred from having that operation performed on their children, I do hereby sincerely declare that he was not inoculated, but received the distemper in the common way of infection.

"And I suppose the report could only arise from its being my known opinion that inoculation was a safe and beneficial practice, and from my having said among my acquaintance that I intended to have my child inoculated as soon as he should have recovered sufficient strength from a flux with which he had been long afflicted.

"B. FRANKLIN."

Franklin had been prevented from attempting to prove his theory about lightning and electricity by the fact that there was no high hill or lofty tower in or near Philadelphia. In the Summer of 1752, however, he decided to reach the clouds by means of a kite made of thin silk instead of paper. He describes his own experiment in the form of directions to others:

"Make a small cross of two light strips of

cedar, the arm so long as to reach to the four corners of a large, thin silk handkerchief when expanded. Tie the corners of the handkerchief to the extremities of the cross, so you have the body of a kite, which being properly accommodated with a tail, loop and string, will rise in the air like those made of paper; but this being of silk is fitter to bear the wet and wind of a thundergust without tearing. To the top of the upright stick of the cross is to be fixed a very sharp pointed wire, rising a foot or more above the wood. To the end of the twine next the hand is to be tied a silk ribbon, and where the silk and twine join, a key may be fastened.

"This kite is to be raised when a thundergust seems to be coming on, and the person who holds the string must stand within a door or window, or under some cover, so that the silk ribbon may not be wet, and care must be taken that the twine does not touch the frame of the door or window.

"As soon as any of the thunder clouds come over the kite the pointed wire will draw the electric fire from them, and the kite with all the twine will be electrified, and the loose filaments of the twine will stand out every way, and be at-

tracted by an approaching finger. And when the rain has wetted the kite and twine so that it can conduct the electric fire freely, you will find it stream out plentifully from the key on the approach of your knuckle. At this key the phial may be charged, and from electric fire thus obtained spirits may be kindled and all the other experiments be performed."

Franklin had done as he directed others to do. He constructed his silk kite, with the aid of his elder son, William, ready for the next "thundergust," as they called a thunderstorm. In a short time a storm seemed to be brewing, and he and William set out together for the field or common where they found shelter under a cowshed to keep the silk ribbon dry at the lower end of the hemp twine. The kite darted about at first, but soon soared up among the gathering clouds.

They watched it a long time, but there seemed to be no lightning. Just as they were about to give up and pull down the kite there was a flash of lightning, and the fine fibers of hemp in the kite string began to bristle and stand up like the hairs on the tail of an angry cat. Franklin knew what this meant, for it was exactly what he expected. The dry silk ribbon which he held in his

THE FIBERS OF HEMP BEGAN TO BRISTLE.

hand was a non-conductor. Knowing that the big iron key tied at the lower end of the twine must be charged with electricity he placed his knuckle near it.

The key responded with a snap, and a spark shot across into Franklin's finger, which felt the prick of pain caused by a slight electric shock. The father turned his eager face toward William and said, with a triumphant chuckle:

"I knew it. Lightning *is* electricity! Bring me the bottle of spirits."

William lost no time in coming with the Leyden jar and the lightning which had struck the point of the wire protruding from the end of the upright kite-stick up in the clouds was transferred, in the form of electricity, and stored in that bottle.

Benjamin and William Franklin went home with the queer kite and bottled lightning. The pointed wire suggested the lightning rod, which the philosopher soon turned to good account in protecting buildings, as the lightning which came near enough to strike a house or barn would be attracted to the rod and carried down into the ground by an iron "conductor" as it had run down that kite string to the key.

Franklin related how he once received great benefit from his invention:

"My own house was one day attacked by lightning, which occasioned the neighbors to run in to give assistance in case of its being on fire. But no damage was done, and my family was only found a good deal frightened with the violence of the explosion.

"Last year, my house being enlarged, the conductor was obliged to be taken down. I found, upon examination, that the pointed termination of copper had been almost entirely melted. Thus, in the course of time, this invention has proved of use to the author of it, and has added this personal advantage to the pleasure he before received from having been useful to others."

But while scientists and many others approved of Franklin's experiments and lightning conductors, there were plenty of ignorant and superstitious people, including some ministers, who believed that Franklin was "flying in the face of Providence." An eminent Boston divine preached against Franklin as a blasphemous meddler with affairs above human knowledge by thus tampering with the "battery of heaven." When the city of Lisbon, Portugal,

was destroyed by an earthquake and forty thousand lives were lost, in 1755, three years after Franklin's experiment, this minister declared that the awful catastrophe was a judgment from heaven upon Franklin's sacrilege, but he failed to explain why many earthquakes had happened before Franklin's day, or why such a calamity should have been visited upon a foreign city Franklin had never seen, and where few, if any, of its inhabitants had ever seen or heard of a lightning rod!

The widespread interest in Franklin's proof of the sameness of lightning and electricity, and the success of his lightning rod, brought him many honors and degrees from colleges in America and Europe.

Two hundred years after the birth of the son of the humble soap boiler of Boston, scientists, philosophers and wise men came from all parts of the civilized world to honor the memory of Benjamin Franklin. A colossal kite, made of many electric lights, from the frame of which hung a huge fiery key, was part of the elaborate illumination about the great City Hall of Philadelphia in memory of Franklin's bringing lightning down from the clouds and storing it in a

bottle to prove that it and electricity are one and the same.

CHAPTER XV

For Colony and Country

"The first mistake in public business is going into it," was one of "Poor Richard's" sayings. If serving one's country can be a mistake at any time, Benjamin Franklin made it when he accepted the clerkship of the General Assembly of the Province of Pennsylvania, at the age of thirty. The next year, in 1737, he was appointed postmaster of Philadelphia. In spite of the cynical saying of "Poor Richard" about serving the public, Franklin, late in life, referred with pride to the people's confidence in him in the early days when he was a modest postmaster. His public offices were turned to good account in making the "Gazette" a better newspaper, and giving it a wider circulation increased the amount of advertising and combined to make

his paper the most popular and profitable journal in all the American colonies.

While assistant and acting postmaster of Philadelphia Franklin began to improve the postal service, for he tried to better everything he touched. From being clerk of the Assembly he was elected a burgess or member of the House, and was re-elected to that honorable office ten times. In the city of his adoption he was made a justice of the peace, which was quite an honor in those days, besides being elected to common and select council, giving his earnest attention to the minutest details of the city's affairs.

Within thirty years after he had run away from home, Benjamin Franklin was a famous and honored citizen. He went back and visited his old home in Boston at least once every ten years while his father and mother were living, proud and happy in all the good their youngest son was doing. James Franklin was still disgruntled and unsuccessful in business, so Benjamin returned good for evil by taking his brother's ten-year-old son back to Philadelphia, sending him to school, teaching him the printer's trade and setting him up in that business in Newport, Rhode Island.

After Josiah and Abiah Franklin died, their youngest son erected to their memory a handsome monument which is seen to-day near the old Park Street Church, Boston, with its famous epitaph written by Benjamin, who held no grudge against any of his family for their harsh and unkind treatment of him in his boyhood days. In this he illustrated his own maxim, "A good example is the best sermon."

History repeated itself in the Franklin family, as is proven by the following extract from a letter from Benjamin to his sister Jane, about William's attempt to run away to sea:

"When boys see prizes brought in and quantities of money shared among the men, and their gay living, it fills their heads with notions that half distract them, and puts them quite out of conceit with trades and the dull ways of getting money by working.

"My only son left my house unknown to us all and got on board a privateer from whence I fetched him. No one imagined it was hard usage at home that made him do this. Every one that knows me thinks I am too indulgent a parent, as well as master."

In 1743 Franklin wrote a learned paper en-

titled "Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pennsylvania." It included a plan for founding the Academy which grew to be the great University of Pennsylvania, of which its founder was a trustee in its earlier days. He was very candid and matter-of-fact in his ideas on educating and benefiting young people, as this, from his "Autobiography," shows:

"Human felicity is produced not so much by great pieces of good fortune that seldom happen, as by little advantages that occur every day. Thus if you teach a poor young man to shave himself and keep his razor in order, you may contribute more to his life than giving him a thousand guineas. This sum may be soon spent, the regret only remaining of having foolishly consumed it. But in the other case he escapes the frequent vexation of waiting for barbers, and of their sometimes dirty fingers, offensive breath and dull razors. He shaves when most convenient to him and enjoys, daily the pleasure of its being done with a good instrument."

There were threatenings of war between England and France over the long disputed question of territory in America. The French in Canada were fast enlisting the Indians on their side, and

many of the savage tribes were bitter against the English. Franklin, as a special commissioner, had encountered some of them, showing that he believed in treating them kindly. Delegates assembled at Albany, New York, to confer with chiefs of the Six Nations. Franklin was one of four commissioners appointed by Governor Hamilton of Pennsylvania. Besides the Indian question there was great need of all the colonies uniting to protect themselves against their common enemies whether white men or red. Franklin printed in the "Pennsylvania Gazette" a crude picture of a serpent cut up into parts representing the different colonies, and under it was printed the legend, *"Unite or Die."* This design was used later on a colonial flag.

The year before the Albany conference, on the death of the postmaster-general for the colonies, Franklin received the appointment of assistant postmaster-general. This made it necessary for him to travel about among the colonies, to all the post offices from New England to Georgia—seventy-five in number. Of course, his personal contact with the people in this official capacity made him the best known man in the colonies. Being the soul of kind-hearted courtesy and good

humor, Franklin was beloved as well as respected wherever he went, and by personal intercourse he followed up the liberty-loving instruction he was still giving the people in "Poor Richard's Almanac."

Franklin improved the postal service, making it far more useful to the people, and, at the same time, yield a good revenue to the English crown. The colonial post offices had always been a bill of expense to the government until Franklin took charge of them. He also increased the frequency of the mails, especially between Philadelphia and New York. He introduced a "stage wagon" to run back and forth over that ninety miles as often as once a week whether there was any mail to carry between those two cities or not! Before this time the mail had been carried by incapable men on old, jaded horses. The mail carriers were appointed because they were old, or had nothing better to do. They consulted their own convenience, starting out when they thought it worth while, and coming back when they happened to get ready. So, when Franklin's once-a-week "fast mail" service was inaugurated there were slow-going people who shook their heads doubtfully. They felt that the new post-

master-general had set a pace which it would be impossible to hold out long!

In England such colonial enterprise seemed wholly unnecessary. The ministry of the Mother Country regarded the colonies with contempt. They had no use for their American cousins but as buyers of English manufactures, and to raise tobacco for English use. On one occasion a number of Virginia planters petitioned for money to build a college in their colony, giving as a reason for this that "Virginians have souls." The English attorney-general for the colonies had no patience with such sentimental nonsense. "O *hang* your *souls!*" said he. *"Go raise tobacco!"*

The colonial people were loyal to "the Old Country." They bought their clothing, furniture, farming implements—all manufactured goods—from England, and those who were able sent their sons there to be educated.

About this time a youth named George Washington went on a hazardous errand from the capital of Virginia to the Ohio region to serve a "notice to quit" on the French military commander. That youth saw a place to build a fort at the fork of the Allegheny and Monongahela

rivers. The Governor of Virginia sent men to erect a fort, and notified the Governors of the other colonies to send men and provisions for the common defense. Young Major Washington was detailed to aid in this work and protect the men who were building the fort. Before he reached the place he encountered a body of French and struck the first blow of the Seven Years' War which involved England and France.

The American part of that long conflict is called the French and Indian War. The colonies came slowly to the defense of the frontier, while the ministry of England was sending out troops under General Braddock to fight the French and Indians. Franklin was selected to raise men, wagons and provisions to aid the English soldiery. This was a very difficult task, for, aside from the aversion of the discontented people risking their lives and property on behalf of a government that treated them so outrageously, large numbers of the wealthy and influential population of Pennsylvania were Friends, or Quakers, who did not believe in war or even in resisting the overbearing treatment of the English or the murderous attacks of the Indians.

In order to soothe the ill-feeling against the Quakers and incline the people to combine in self-defense, Franklin wrote a witty pamphlet on the subject, of which this is a short extract:

"'For my part,' says A, 'I am no coward; but hang me if I fight to save the Quakers.'

"'That is to say,' B replied, 'you will not pump the sinking ship, because it will save the rats as well as yourselves.'

"O, my friends, the glory of serving and saving others is superior to the advantage of being served and secured. Let us resolutely and generously unite in our country's cause, in which to die is the sweetest of all deaths; and may the God of armies bless our honest endeavors!"

In order to raise the necessary number of horses and wagons for Braddock's "regulars," and the colonial companies, Franklin had to hold himself responsible, paying over six thousand dollars of his own money to the farmers and other owners. Most of the money he had great difficulty in collecting from the British government, to which he was still so loyal, and some of it he never received.

When General Braddock was ready Franklin

came to his aid with one hundred and fifty four-horse wagons and two hundred and fifty-nine pack horses, which he had been able to gather together, by using his own money freely, in twenty days. Braddock invited Franklin to dine with him every day, and told the philosopher what he proposed to do. Franklin tried to prepare the English general for Indian warfare, but Braddock smiled patronizingly and replied:

"These savages may indeed be a formidable enemy to your raw American militia. But upon the king's regular and disciplined troops it is impossible that they should make any impression."

Franklin saw, as young Washington, one of General Bradock's aides, also observed, that it was useless to argue further with the obstinate, opinionated British general. They both warned Braddock against falling into an ambush, but nothing could make any impression on his conceit, and he and his "regulars" were surprised and shot down like so many helpless cattle. Braddock, mortally wounded, expressed his dying regret that he had been so foolish, but the lesson was lost on the English king and his advisers.

After the defeat of the British under Braddock the Indians, becoming bolder, carried on the warfare in Pennsylvania, murdering and scalping men and carrying away women and children into captivity. The peaceful Moravian village of Gnadenhutten, near Bethlehem, was destroyed and great fear spread to Philadelphia.

A force of five hundred men was raised, and Benjamin Franklin appointed general, though he thought himself unfit for a military career. He set out, with his son William as aide, and arranged to defend that region against the savages He succeeded in his undertaking, but while he was absent from Philadelphia a violent quarrel arose in the Assembly, and General Franklin was needed to restore order.

Leaving Colonel Clapham in charge, Franklin hurried back to Philadelphia to "pour oil on the troubled waters." The soldiers under Clapham went skating, like a lot of schoolboys, one cold November day, on the Lehigh River. The Indians, watching their chance, rushed in, like a pack of fierce, hungry wolves, took possession of the fort and massacred the small garrison left in charge. The Indians plundered the fort and

other buildings, and laid Gnadenhutten again in ashes.

The skaters took refuge in the woods, where they were pursued by the Indians. Many white men were murdered, and those who escaped the tomahawk and scalping knife starved and froze to death in the bitter cold winter weather. Although Franklin did not consider himself a soldier, he did his duty far better than some who believed they had greater military skill. Between those Indian massacres and the quarrels in the councils of the white men, Braddock's disastrous defeat left Pennsylvania in a very bad condition.

CHAPTER XVI

Pennsylvania's Agent in England

The struggle with the "proprietaries," as the descendants of William Penn, the proprietors of Pennsylvania, were called, was more lasting and heartless than that with the Indians. Seventy-five years before this William Penn had re-

ceived from Charles the Second a royal grant of the Province of Pennsylvania. He founded Philadelphia, treated the Indians with kindness, and led a life of noble philanthropy and self-denial. He died in England in 1718, leaving the vast estate of Pennsylvania to his sons. Penn's descendants had no such lofty ideas about their property in America. Their only anxiety was to get as much money out of it as possible. Even in their day Pennsylvania was considered worth fifty million dollars to the Penn family.

When the English government began to tax the colonies to pay for the Seven Years' War in Europe, the people objected, for the colonists had been to great expense in their own defense. The discontent was made worse, in Pennsylvania especially, by the fact that the taxes on great tracts of territory still belonging to the Penns were not paid by that family, who claimed to be free from taxation, and refused to bear their share of England's war debts.

The troubles with the British crown and the owners of Pennsylvania, on account of unjust taxation, resulted in the sending of Benjamin Franklin to England to represent the interests of the people of the Province.

Before sailing for England Franklin made one more visit to win back the Indians. While absent on this long trip he wrote this to his wife:

"I had a good mind not to write to you by this opportunity, but I never can be ill-natured enough even when there is most occasion. I think I won't tell you that we are well, and that we expect to return about the middle of the week, nor will I send you a word of news; that's poz (positive). My duty to mother, love to the children, and to Miss Betsy and Gracie. I am your *loving* husband.

"P. S. I have *scratched out the loving words,* being writ in haste by mistake, when I forgot I was angry."

In those days a voyage to Europe was the undertaking of a lifetime. At this time there were pirates, privateers and men-of-war sailing the seas and likely to pounce upon any craft for plunder, or for political reasons. On the 4th of April, 1757, Franklin, with his son William, set out from Philadelphia. Several friends went with them as far as Trenton, New Jersey. They were delayed in reaching New York until Monday noon.

Franklin was afraid their ship had sailed, but he was pleased, on his arrival in New York, to see it still waiting. There was no need of anxiety, for the father and son waited eleven weeks before Lord Loudoun, military commander for the colonies, gave permission for the captain to sail down the harbor. Six weeks longer that waiting ship rode at anchor in the lower bay. During seventeen weary weeks of waiting Franklin and his party ate up, for the third time, the provisions they had laid in for the voyage, but Franklin made no complaint. He always made the best of such experiences.

At last the signal for sailing, under sealed orders, was given. After five days the captain was permitted to open his letter of instructions and detach his ship from the fleet of ninety vessels they were with, then on its way to attack the French at Louisburg, Nova Scotia. At that time there was not a single lighthouse on the coast of North America. It was a tedious, stormy passage, but they finally arrived at Falmouth, England on a Sunday morning. Franklin wrote home:

"The bell ringing for church, we went thither

immediately, and with hearts full of gratitude returned sincere thanks to God for the mercies we had received.

"If I were a devout Churchman, perhaps I should, on this occasion, vow to build a chapel to some saint. But as I am not, if I were to vow at all it should be to build a *lighthouse.*"

On reaching London Franklin took lodgings in the house of Mrs. Stevenson, 7 Craven Street, Strand. He and his son each had a body servant, and they maintained a carriage, as they thought it necessary to keep up a certain show of quiet elegance in order to be presentable at the offices of the king's ministers and the homes of the Penns. The haughty proprietors received Franklin coldly and treated him with insulting disdain. He presented a brief statement of the views of the Pennsylvania Assembly.

This document was a clear statement of the case, couched in the most respectful language, but the proprietaries declared that it was vague and disrespectful. Finding that the Penns were not disposed to be just or reasonable the provincial agent turned to the Lords of Trade, and the members of the King's Council. He found the old king, George the Second, more approachable

and more ready to listen to reason than the haughty grandsons of William Penn.

It was next to impossible for a man without birth or social position to make much headway with the British government at that time. But Benjamin Franklin made the best of a difficult matter. He became acquainted with the leading scientists, visited the University of Cambridge, took his son traveling in England and Scotland, and visited the villages in which their ancestors had lived. While they were in Scotland, in 1769, the University of St. Andrew conferred upon Franklin the honorary degree of doctor of laws.

Gradually, as the great men of England became acquainted with him, Dr. Franklin was a welcome guest in the salons of London, not merely as a philosopher and scientist, but as a wit and teller of humorous stories. The most distinguished men of letters crowded around him, and Hume, the great English historian, and Lord Kames, the famous philosopher and critic, became his intimate friends.

Thus several years passed. While Franklin was making himself known in England, matters were going wrong in Pennsylvania. Just as he

was starting on a trip to Ireland he received word that the proprietaries had succeeded in having an act of the Assembly repealed, which was yet to be passed upon by the English crown. Unpacking his saddle-bags he spent the summer in London to defeat the Penns, if possible. He did this by a rare diplomatic stroke, enlisting the sympathies of Lord Mansfield, and inducing the British Lords of Commission to reverse their own decision; this left the act of the Pennsylvania Assembly standing as it had been passed by the people.

This defeat enraged the proprietaries, and made it necessary for Mr. John Penn, a grandson of William Penn, to go to Pennsylvania as its Governor, in order better to look after their interests in the Assembly of the Province, as they felt that previous Governors appointed by them had yielded too much to the wishes of the people.

On the 25th of October, 1760, George the Second died, leaving the crown to his grandson, a stupid, freakish young man, with the beginnings of insanity, which had not come to be recognized, who reigned as George the Third. It is quite likely that if this young king had been a man of

sound sense and reason the War of the Revolution against England would have been averted for many years.

Young William Franklin was married in London in September, 1762. Lord Bute, then English Prime Minister, as a favor to his friend Dr. Franklin, secured for the son an appointment as royal Governor of New Jersey.

Franklin, finding that he could make no further headway with the unreasonable young king prepared to return to America, where his presence was sorely needed in Pennsylvania, as Mr. John Penn was soon to become Governor of that Province.

The Pennsylvania agent reached Philadelphia, after a delightfully smooth voyage of nine weeks. Of this he wrote to his friend Lord Kames, the Scotch author:

"On the first day of November I arrived safe and well at my own home, after the absence of near six years; found my wife and daughter well —the latter grown quite a woman, with many amiable accomplishments acquired in my absence—and my friends as hearty and affectionate as ever, with whom my house was filled for many days, to congratulate me on my return. I

had been chosen yearly during my absence to represent the city of Philadelphia in our Provincial Assembly; and on my appearance in the House they voted me three thousand pounds sterling ($15,000) for my services in England, and their thanks delivered by the Speaker."

Franklin returned the $15,000 to be used as should be deemed best for the benefit of the whole Province.

CHAPTER XVII

Ten More Years in England

The weak but overbearing John Penn was an unhappy combination of fool and knave. To curry favor with the roughs and outlaws of Pennsylvania he appealed to their brutal passions by offering a bounty for the scalps of Indian men and women as if they were wild beasts. This was in glaring contrast with the way John's benevolent grandfather, William Penn, treated the natives. A gang of toughs, known as the

Paxtons, broke into a settlement of converted and peaceful Moravian Indians and murdered the men, women and children, with the apparent sanction of the despicable Governor. Combining this worst element with the bad men of his party who stood ready to knuckle and truckle to the powers that be, however corrupt, for office, money or social position, Governor Penn managed to defeat Franklin's election to the Assembly by a narrow margin, though that patriot had been regularly re-elected to the House for many years.

But Franklin's defeat proved a boomerang for the Penn family. The self-respecting citizens of the Province and members of the Assembly, drew up a petition against the outrageous conduct of the new proprietary Governor, and elected Benjamin Franklin to present it, in person, to the king. The affairs of state were in such bad shape that a special loan had to be raised to defray Dr. Franklin's expenses as agent for the Province a second time. The philosopher's resources and patriotism were equal to the occasion. This time he went alone, for his son, the Governor, was married and living at Burlington, New Jersey.

This time Franklin had only twelve days to prepare for his long journey. He was to sail on a packet ship from Chester, on the Delaware, fifteen miles below Philadelphia. To the jealous rage of Governor Penn, three hundred citizens of Philadelphia, escorted their delegate on horseback to Chester, and saw him sail away.

After a stormy passage of more than four weeks, Franklin found himself again at Mrs. Stevenson's door, in Craven Street, London, There were other colonial agents in the metropolis, sent to protest against unjust British measures for taxation of the American colonies. Grenville was now prime minister. Dr. Franklin and four other agents called on him to protest against the passage of the Stamp Act, but their remonstrances were in vain. Parliament passed it, making it a law, in 1765. The king signed it in with an angry scrawl which showed, as observed by some, that he was becoming insane.

It was only a small sum of money that England hoped to raise from stamps which the colonists were to stick upon legal documents, bills, receipts and the like. Young Americans to-day can remember when stamps were necessary for all sorts of documents to make them legal, yet

there was no complaint. But the Stamp Act was passed by the British Parliament imposing a tax upon American people who were not allowed to elect members to Parliament. That made all the difference in the world. It was the principle of "taxation without representation" that the people considered unjust. To pay any tax, however small, would be wrong, as it would be an admission of England's right to levy such a tax.

The great mistake that King George and his ministers made was in not finding out that the American farmers were more intelligent than the peasants of Europe. Franklin wrote to a friend:

"I took every step in my power to prevent the passing of the Stamp Act. But the tide was too strong against us. The nation was provoked by American claims of legislative independence; and all parties joined in resolving, by this act, to settle the point."

When he saw that the Stamp Act was sure to be passed by Parliament, Franklin wasted his energies in an attempt to have the government of Pennsylvania taken out of the hands of the arrogant and ignorant Penn family and adminis-

tered by the king and his ministers, like those of all the other Provinces. Although he failed in this, his second visit to England was, in other ways, a great success, for he became acquainted with William Pitt and Edmund Burke, and helped make them friendly to the American cause.

When the Stamp Law had been passed the people of the American colonies resisted it. The keenest indignation prevailed, and the officers appointed to sell the stamps to the people were afraid for their lives.

Within a few weeks after Pitt appeared in the House of Commons as the champion of American rights, Dr. Franklin was summoned before that august body to answer many questions concerning the state of affairs in America, where the people were so thoroughly aroused that they refused to buy from England manufactures or anything else that could be dispensed with. This tended to make the manufacturers, merchants and mill hands all take sides with the offended colonies. Franklin took his stand in the presence of the House of Commons, and answered one hundred and seventy-four questions asked him by different members of Parliament. Here

are several of the questions and answers, as afterward published:

"61. Q. Don't you think cloth from England absolutely necessary to them (the colonists)?

"A. No, by no means absolutely necessary; with industry and good management they may very well supply themselves with all they want.

"62. Q. Will it not take a long while to establish that manufacture among them; and must they not in the meanwhile suffer greatly?

"A. I think not. They have made surprising progress already. And I am of opinion that before their old clothes are worn out they will have new ones of their own making.

"173. Q. What used to be the pride of the Americans?

"A. To indulge in the fashions and manufactures of Great Britain.

"174. Q. What is now their pride?

"A. To wear their old clothes over again till they can make new ones."

Never did a man show greater or more ready wisdom and shrewdness than Dr. Franklin did that day in answering, off-hand, the varied ques-

tions of many of the keenest men in England. He did it with such serene frankness that even his bitterest foes could not help wondering at and admiring his coolness and the completeness of his information.

The Rev. George Whitefield, one of the greatest preachers the world has ever seen, wrote of this event:

"Our worthy friend, Dr. Franklin, has gained immortal honor by his behavior at the bar of the House (of Commons). The answer was always found equal, if not superior to his questioner. He stood unappalled, gave pleasure to his friends, and did honor to his country."

Edmund Burke, one of the greatest and most eloquent men in England, wrote to a friend:

"Franklin, as he stood before the bar of Parliament, presented such an aspect of dignity and intellectual superiority as to remind me of a schoolmaster questioned by schoolboys."

But perhaps the highest tribute to Franklin's genius and wisdom came from his royal enemy, George the Third, as he said to his ministers and court when he heard of the ready answers of the provincial agent, "That crafty American is more than a match for you all!"

Not alone in the halls of Parliament did "that crafty American" prove himself an able antagonist to the king, his ministers, and all the cringing court who left no stone unturned in their eager attempts to insult and discredit him in the eyes of the people of England. The truckling Governors of the various Provinces wrote home such ridiculous untruths about matters in America that it was impossible to get at the real state of affairs in the colonies.

Some one, wishing to make the people interested believe that there was no wool worth mentioning in the colonies and that the fishery question was not worth discussing, wrote an absurd and misleading article for one of the London papers, evidently for the purpose of forcing Franklin to rebut it with an indignant denial. But instead of of showing annoyance, the philosophical agent paid the misinformant back in his own coin. He wrote to the editor:

"Dear Sir: Do not let us suffer ourselves to be amused with such groundless objections. The very tails of the American sheep are so laden with wool that each has a little car or wagon on four little wheels to support it and keep it from trailing on the ground. Would they caulk their

ships, would they even litter (bed) their horses with wool if it were not both plenty and cheap?

"And yet *all this is as certainly true as the account,* said to be from Quebec, in all the papers of last week, that the inhabitants of Canada are making preparations for a cod and whale fishery this 'summer in the upper lakes.' Ignorant people may object that the upper lakes are fresh, and that cods and whales are salt water fish, but let them know, sir, that cod, like other fish, when attacked by their enemies, fly into any water where they can be safest; that whales, when they have a mind to eat cod, pursue them wherever they fly, and that the grand leap of the whale in the chase up the Falls of Niagara is esteemed *by all who have seen it* as one of the finest spectacles in Nature!"

In these replies Franklin went only a little farther than the statements of the correspondents, thus discrediting them in the eyes of the readers of the London newspapers far more successfully than if he had lost his temper and indulged in scolding or abuse. The English people soon found that, while they did not always understand what the American agent was driving at, he was a good-natured man, and "a

sad wag, don't you know." This in addition to the need the merchants, manufacturers, and mill hands felt of having American business, made the English people clamor for the repeal of the Stamp Act.

The king and his ministers were therefore compelled to take back the unpopular Stamp law. The news of this came to the colonies just after the report of the examination of Dr. Franklin by the House of Commons. The American people, wild with joy, rang bells, built bonfires, and fired guns and cannons. Franklin's daughter, Sarah, wrote to her "honored papa," "I never heard so much noise in my life. The very children seemed distracted."

Feeling that his mission in England was now accomplished, Franklin wrote asking permission to come home. He was now over sixty, and he had lived too long away from his wife and children. His daughter was married meanwhile to a man named Richard Bache. His wife dreaded the sea voyage so much that she could not think of going to join her husband in England. But the Pennsylvania Assembly elected him agent for another year. His grandson, William Temple Franklin, came to complete his educa-

tion and to comfort and help the lonely old philosopher.

Partly to soothe the helpless wrath of the king for the repeal of the Stamp Act, Parliament immediately passed the Declaratory Act, announcing the right of the British government to tax the colonies at pleasure. As the obstinate monarch was still dissatisfied, Parliament passed another bill during the following year, 1767, laying a duty on glass, paints, paper, and tea. This raised an uproar in America. The Englishmen in authority seemed unable to understand that it was the principle of taxation without having any say whether it should be paid or how much it should be, that the king's still loyal American subjects were opposing.

Nothing could satisfy King George and his servile courtiers but unreasoning obedience on the part of the American colonists. To enforce this he sent soldiers to Massachusetts and other colonies. All this only served to fan the fury of the people into a flame.

Meanwhile some of the time-serving Governors were sending to the ministry false reports of the conduct of the people and their leaders, for the purpose of inciting the king to send more

soldiers and destroy all who refused to submit to any kind of treatment the officials of the crown chose to heap upon them.

The burning resentment of the people burst out here and there in acts of violence, and made Franklin's task more and more difficult, but he combined marvelous serenity with the highest skill in diplomacy. No other man of his time could have performed his difficult task so well. He wrote humorous stories for the papers which the king's ministry wondered at and did not see that "that crafty American" was laughing in his sleeve at them all the time.

One day, while he was entertained at Lord Le Despenser's, some one said that the telling of great truths in the form of a fable was a lost art. Franklin asked for pen, ink and paper, and at once wrote the following:

"Once upon a time an eagle, scaling round a farmer's barn, and espying a hare, darted down upon him like a sunbeam, seized him in his claws, and remounted with him in the air. He soon found that he had a creature of more courage and strength than a hare, for which, notwithstanding the keenness of his eyesight, he had mistaken a cat.

"The snarling and scrambling of the prey was very inconvenient, and, what was worse, she had disengaged herself from his talons, grasped his body with her four limbs so as to stop his breath, and seized fast hold of his throat with her teeth.

" 'Pray,' said the eagle, 'let go your hold, and I will release you.'

" 'Very fine,' said the cat, 'I have no fancy to fall from this height and be crushed to death. You have taken me up, and you shall stoop and let me down.'

"The eagle thought it necessary to stoop accordingly."

The comment on Dr. Franklin's performance was that "the moral was so applicable to England and America that the fable was allowed to be original, and highly applauded."

While living on in London, longing for home and deeply desirous of doing something to allay the fever of excitement on the American side, Franklin was shown some letters from Governor Hutchinson, of Massachusetts, misrepresenting the state of affairs in his Province to influence the prejudices of the king and his advisers. Franklin secured the permission of his friend to send copies of these without signature to a friend

in America, in order that certain indiscreet leaders might be warned against the worst. The copies were printed and distributed in Massachusetts. It became known that they were written by Governor Hutchinson, and an indignant petition was drawn up, signed by many citizens, and sent to the king demanding the removal of this Governor as a traitor to his trust.

Dr. Franklin had become entirely too popular in England to please the king and the Tories. Here, they thought, was a chance to crush him. He was arraigned before the Committee for Colonial Affairs to give reasons for the petition against Governor Hutchinson, for Franklin was now agent also for Massachusetts as well as for Georgia and New Jersey. To his surprise, Chief Solicitor Wedderburn had been retained to prosecute him as if he were a criminal. Four cabinet ministers were present and thirty-five members of the Privy Council. Lord North, the Prime Minister, and the Archbishop of Canterbury were there to witness the humbling of their American enemy. Wedderburn accused Franklin of stealing the Hutchinson letters, and printing them for the sake of making money. The

so-called judges so far forgot their dignity as to laugh boisterously while Wedderburn used abusive and insulting language, calling Franklin a thief and other hard names. Among the spectators stood a few of Franklin's friends, but they felt obliged to preserve a solemn silence.

A historian has described Franklin's appearance during this trying ordeal: "He stood at the edge of the recess formed by the chimney, with one elbow resting upon the mantel, and his cheek upon his hand. He was motionless as a statue, and had composed his features into such calm rigidity that not the movement of a muscle could be detected.

"As usual, he was dressed simply but with great elegance. His costume, which was admirably fitted to a form as perfect as Grecian sculptor ever chiseled, was of rich, figured silk velvet. In all that room there was not an individual who, in physical beauty, was the peer of Franklin. In all that room there was not another who, in intellectual greatness, could have met the trial so grandly."

This ordeal was in strong contrast with that of Franklin's appearance before the House of Commons, and grandly as he met the questions

that day, his serene deportment in the presence of false accusation and gross abuse was even more magnificent. "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."

Two or three days afterward he received a curt note dismissing him from his office as postmaster-general of the American colonies. Yet he was not crushed. He knew that much of the anger shown by the members of the king's party was because he had declined high positions which had been offered him as a bribe to turn him against his countrymen. But Benjamin Franklin could not, like his son, be corrupted with an office. When an official called on him in the name of the government of Great Britain to tell him that there was hardly an honor in the gift of the crown which he might not ask if he would but comply with the wishes of the ministry, Franklin replied: "The ministry, I am sure, would rather give me a place in a cart to Tyburn (to be hanged)."

The government was forced to repeal the law which levied duty on paint, paper and glass, leaving only the duty on tea. The retaining of this tax was like a taunt to the indignant colon-

ists. They refused to receive the ships which came loaded with tea into their harbors. In Boston a band of men, disguised as Indians, boarded a tea ship and emptied the chests into the harbor. This was called "The Boston Tea Party." It was an angry defiance rather than a brave act. It brought about a bill in Parliament closing the port of Boston. The other colonies came to the rescue and saved Boston from starving. The Boston Port Bill required the presence of more soldiers. This aggravated the colonists still more, and when King George sent to hire men of other countries, like the Hessians, to destroy his still loyal American subjects who were struggling only for their rights, the people's wrath knew no bounds. On their behalf William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, protested in an impassioned speech in Parliament in which he said:

"If I were an American, as I am an Englishman, while a foreign troop was landed in my country I would never lay down my arms—Never! *Never!* NEVER!"

Franklin was able to distinguish between George the man and George the king, for, after all he had suffered at the hands of the king and

his ministers, he wrote of the private character of George the man:

"I can scarcely conceive a king of better dispositions, of more exemplary virtues, or more truly desirous of promoting the welfare of his subjects."

It is charitable to believe that the seeds of insanity were already sprouting in the brain of George the Third. Yet, with regard to his opposition to paying any unjust tax, Franklin replied:

"I have some little property in America. I will freely spend nineteen shillings in the pound to defend my right of giving or refusing the other shilling. And after all, if I cannot defend that right, I can retire cheerfully with my little family into the boundless woods of America, which are sure to afford freedom and subsistence to any man who can bait a hook or pull a trigger."

Franklin had now passed ten years on his second mission in England. This made sixteen years out of eighteen that he had been forced by his loyalty to be absent from his family. Once more he prepared for the home voyage. He had written to his wife that he could not endure the

separation another year. He felt that Pennsylvania needed his aid and counsel. It was with a relieved and grateful heart that he was getting ready to go home to his wife, "Debby," and his daughter, "Sally," whom he had left a girl of twelve, but was now a matron with two children their grandfather had not seen.

In the midst of his preparations he received word that his wife had died, in December, 1774, following a paralytic shock. After his pictures of the quiet life he could yet enjoy with his "dearest old Joan," and muse, philosophize and experiment to his heart's content, it was hard for him to go home and not find her there. He did not even come back to the same house, for Mrs. Franklin had built a new home on another street during her husband's ten-year absence. Three years before she died Franklin wrote tenderly of his wife: "She proved a good and faithful helpmate; we throve together and have ever mutually endeavored to make each other happy."

One of his maxims, by "Poor Richard," was "A good wife lost is God's gift lost."

CHAPTER XVIII

The Long War and Peace at Last

While Dr. Franklin was sailing across the Atlantic on his way home, the war had "actually begun" at Lexington and Concord. From Philadelphia Franklin wrote to his friend Edmund Burke of the disgraceful stampede of the British regulars from Lexington back to Boston:

"General Gage's troops made a most vigorous retreat—twenty miles in three hours!—scarce to be paralleled in history. The feeble Americans, who pelted them all the way, could scarce keep up with them!"

The humor of this description is better understood when it is remembered that the Tory authorities referred to the American "peasantry" as cowards who would fly before the regulars like so many sheep. Even Dr. Samuel Johnson, one of the greatest of Englishmen, said of the colonists: "The Americans are a race of convicts. They ought to be thankful for anything we can

give them. I am willing to love all mankind except an American!"

Franklin had arrived home on the 5th of May, 1775—just in time to be elected a delegate to the Continental Congress assembling in the State House, now known as Independence Hall, on May 10th. One of the first acts of this Congress was to make Franklin postmaster-general of the colonies.

Dr. Franklin was one of the leading spirits of the Congress, but some of those "most potent, grave and reverend seigniors" thought him too much imbued with a spirit of levity because he made fun of some of the measures they proposed. There were two parties in the Congress, those who were in favor of declaring for American independence, and others, more careful, if not cowardly, who wished to petition the king again, but Franklin too well knew how vain that would be.

When Charleston was burned by the British, Franklin said:

"England has begun to burn our seaport towns, secure, I suppose, that we shall never be able to return the outrage in kind. She may, doubtless, destroy them all.

"But if she wishes to recover our commerce, are these the probable means? She must certainly be distracted, for no tradesman out of Bedlam (a famous English insane asylum) ever thought of increasing the number of his customers by knocking them in the head; or of enabling them to pay their debts by burning their houses."

He also wrote this now-famous letter to his English friend, Strahan, who was like Franklin, a printer and publisher:

"MR. STRAHAN:

"You are a member of Parliament, and one of that majority which has doomed my country to destruction. You have begun to burn our towns and murder our people. Look upon your hands! They are stained with the blood of your relations. You and I were long friends; you are now my enemy, and

"I am,

"Yours,

"B. FRANKLIN."

Franklin had lost his faithful wife and now he was losing his best friends. But harder than either of these was the disloyalty of his son, William, the Governor of New Jersey, who had

also become malignant in his opposition to the cause for which his father had risked his life and all that he possessed. The Congress had William Franklin arrested and removed to Connecticut. At this time a newspaper printed the following report:

"Day before yesterday Governor Franklin, of New Jersey, passed through Hartford. Mr. Franklin is a noted tory and ministerial tool, and has been exceedingly busy in perplexing the cause of liberty, and in serving the designs of the British king and his ministers.

"He is son to Dr. Benjamin Franklin, the genius of the day, and the great patron of American liberty. If His Excellency the Governor escapes the vengeance of the people, due to the enormity of his crimes, his redemption will follow, not from personal merit, but from the high esteem and veneration which the country entertains for his honored father."

After an imprisonment of twenty-eight months, William Franklin was exchanged, and pensioned by the British government for his untiring efforts to defeat his father's cause. Long after the defection of "Billy," the father, still deeply hurt in heart, wrote:

"Nothing has ever affected me with such keen sensations, as to find myself deserted in my old age by my only son, and not only deserted, but to find him taking up arms in a cause wherein my good name, fortune and life were at stake."

Franklin's faith and cheerful humor stood him and the other heroes of the Revolution in good stead in those crucial days, described by Thomas Paine as "the times that try men's souls."

Remembering his success in raising wagons and supplies for Braddock's army he was put in charge of the same work in this war. All his ingenuity in invention came into play in planning defenses for Philadelphia.

Being one of three commissioners, Franklin visited Washington at Cambridge in October, 1775, during the siege of Boston. One of the duties of this executive committee of three was to devise a flag for the Continental Army. Conferring with Washington, they decided upon thirteen red and white stripes, representing the thirteen British colonies, with the British union, the crosses of St. George and St. Andrew which still composed the English Union Jack. This banner showed that they were not fighting, as so

many States, for independence, but were still thirteen loyal colonies struggling for their rights as British subjects. Franklin had made a study of heraldry and flag symbolism. It is believed that he advised Washington with regard to the circle of thirteen stars set in the blue field of the first United States flag, made by Betsy Ross, when the people were at last forced to fight for independence and separation from the Mother Country.

Returning to Philadelphia Franklin was sent on a difficult mission to Canada, which proved unsuccessful. This undertaking was beset with hardships—too many and too heavy for a portly man of seventy afflicted with gout. But no enterprise was too arduous or discouraging for the patriotic zeal of Benjamin Franklin. After his return he was appointed one of a committee of five to write the Declaration of Independence. As Franklin was the oldest man in the committee the rest would have required him to make the first draft of that document. But he, with his customary modesty and acuteness of observation, declared that young Thomas Jefferson should write out the Declaration, and the result proved the wisdom of their decision.

During the days of debating and signing that immortal document the solemnity of the great occasion was enlivened by Franklin's wit. The other signers caught the spirit and true American humor and American independence were born at the same time. It was a solemn time. The doughty signers knew too well that this act might bring them one and all to the gallows. One of them said to the rest, "Now we must all hang together." Dr. Franklin retorted, with a funny twinkle, "Yes, we must all hang together or, assuredly, we shall all *hang—separately!*"

Within two weeks after the signing of the Declaration of Independence, Franklin was chosen president of the convention to form a constitution for the State of Pennsylvania. Just after this he received a letter from his English friend, Lord Howe—with whose sister he had played chess while living in London—to arrange for a conference which might bring about a reconciliation between Mother England and her American daughter.

"Long did I endeavor," he wrote to the British admiral, "with unfeigned and unwearied zeal, to preserve from breaking that fine and noble china vase, the British Empire; for I

knew that, once broken, the separate parts could not retain even their share of the strength or value that existed in the whole and that a perfect reunion of the parts could scarce be hoped for."

The conference took place and Benjamin Franklin, John Adams and Edward Rutledge were forced to inform Lord Howe that the offers of peace had come too late. During the interview Lord Howe expressed a deep fraternal feeling for those who were fighting for their rights, saying: "If America should fail, I should feel and lament it like the loss of a brother."

Dr. Franklin bowed low and said with a bland but meaning smile, "we will do our utmost endeavor to spare your lordship that mortification!"

The story is told of a mysterious stranger, who came to Philadelphia and asked to deliver a secret message to a committee appointed by the Continental Congress. As he would explain nothing the committee was not appointed. The strange man came again with the same request, and then again.

At last Congress appointed John Jay, Dr. Franklin and Thomas Jefferson to meet the

stranger. The committee went to the place requested and awaited in silence the coming of the unknown ambassador. Soon a man entered, dignified in manner and of military bearing.

"What is your mission?" they finally asked. The man replied, with a French accent:

"His most Christian Majesty, the king of France, has heard of your struggle in defense of your rights and for liberty. He has desired me to meet you as his representative, and to express to you his respect and sympathy; also to say to you, in secrecy, that if the time comes when you need aid, his assistance will not be withheld."

The committee expressed surprise. "What is the evidence of your authority?"

By way of answer, the gentleman drew his hand across his throat, saying, "Gentlemen, I shall take care of my head."

"But," said one of the three, "if what you say is true, we must secure the friendly action of our Congress."

"Gentlemen," said the strange man again, repeating the uncanny gesture, "I shall take care of my head." Then he added, earnestly: "If you want arms, you may have them; if you want

ammunition, you may have it; if you want money, you may have it. Gentlemen, I shall take care of my head."

After this strange incident the mysterious messenger disappeared from public sight. No one ever knew who he was, nor if he were really sent by the king of France.

Dr. Franklin's scientific experiments and treatises had won him many friends in France. He had visited that country during his second mission to England, and was then presented at court. The French were also in sympathy with the American cause, both because of their good will toward American freedom and the ill will they bore their ancient enemies across the English Channel. The old philosopher received a long letter from a scientific friend in France, which, read between the lines, revealed the fact that the French would welcome the opportunity of helping America if it could be done quietly enough to avoid a war with England.

This letter came soon after the battle of Long Island, while Washington and his destitute army were in retreat, and pursued by the British toward Philadelphia. The prospects were then most discouraging to the revolting colonies.

So this secret French offer of experienced soldiers, guns and money brought joy to the hearts of the leaders in Congress, who resolved at once to send an embassy of the highest distinction to France. Dr. Franklin was unanimously elected on the first ballot. When the result of the voting was announced, the aged philosopher said to Dr. Rush, who sat next him:

"I am old and good for nothing. But as the storekeepers say of their remnants of cloth, I am 'but a fag-end,' and you may have me 'for what you please.' "

Thomas Jefferson and Silas Deane, who was an agent already in Europe, were elected commissioners to France. But, on account of the illness of his wife, Jefferson could not go, so Arthur Lee, also living in Europe, was chosen in his stead.

Franklin embarked in the "Reprisal," a fast sailing sloop of war carrying sixteen guns. He took with him his grandson, William Temple Franklin, son of William, the former Governor of New Jersey, a promising youth of eighteen, and Benjamin Franklin Bache, his daughter Sarah's son, a boy of seven. Young Temple Franklin did not side with his father, but always

remained loyal to his grandfather and the American cause.

Every precaution had been taken to keep Franklin's mission a secret. He said afterward that of all his eight voyages across the Atlantic, this was the most distressing. A fierce gale drove the little craft well across to its destination. The aged ambassador, now corpulent and gouty, was compelled to keep to his cramped quarters. Several times they were pursued by British cruisers. Though instructed to keep from fighting and attend only to the safety of his precious passenger, Captain Wickes, of the "Reprisal," captured two British brigs, rich with spoils of war, not far from the English Channel, and cast anchor in Quiberon Bay, near the mouth of the Loire. Dr. Franklin and his two grandsons took a carriage to the city of Nantes. The voyage was a quick one for that time, from October 26 to November 29, 1776.

When the English learned that their old enemy had crossed the ocean and was safe in France they were astounded, but when they found that the little American sloop had not only escaped the British ships of war, but had also captured two English ships almost on their own

premises, they were provoked beyond measure.

Silas Deane, one of Franklin's fellow-commissioners, joyously wrote from France:

"Here is the hero and philosopher and patriot —all united in this celebrated American, who, at the age of seventy-four, risks all dangers for his country."

Lord Stormont, the British minister, indignant at the ovations given to Franklin, notified the French court that if "that odious American" were allowed to stay in Paris, he, as ambassador of Great Britain, would withdraw. Franklin came and received the most enthusiastic welcome—yet Stormont stayed! Not liking to embarrass the friendly French, and harboring no ill-feeling toward the British minister, Franklin took up his residence in the little town of Passy, then a few miles out of Paris (but now within the city limits), where a wealthy admirer named de Chaumont placed a small castle at his disposal. Here Franklin lived the nine years that he represented the American government in France.

One day a huge ornamented cake came addressed to "Le Digne Franklin" ("the worthy Franklin"). Mr. Lee and Mr. Deane laugh-

ingly objected because the French recognized no one but Franklin, and ignored the other two members of the committee.

"On the contrary," retorted Franklin, "this cake is addressed to all three of us, only the French do not know how to spell English names. See? 'Le' (Lee), 'Digne' (pronounced 'Deane') and 'Franklin.' "

The news from America was most discouraging, but Franklin made the best of everything. "It will be all right," he kept saying—or *"Ça ira"* in French. His cheerful humor soon became proverbial. The people quoted Franklin's hopeful phrase and composed a revolutionary song with *"Ça ira"* for its title and refrain.

When a gloating Englishman called and told him General Howe had taken Philadelphia, the old philosopher answered sturdily, "I beg your pardon, sir—*Philadelphia has taken Howe!"* This, in a few months, proved true. Shortly after this the Americans in France received the glad news that the British general, Burgoyne, and all his army had surrendered at Saratoga.

England was greatly alarmed and sent secret envoys to Franklin at Passy, lest the Americans should acknowledge allegiance to France.

Everything the Americans demanded at first was now freely conceded. But Franklin and the others told them they were too late with their proposed concessions, for now the Americans would accept nothing short of independence and complete separation from Great Britain.

On the 5th of February, 1778, the French court and the American commission signed the treaty of alliance which aided the struggling colonies and Washington's poor, starving little army to win the final victory at Yorktown, more than three years later. The French-American alliance was no longer a secret. The American envoys were publicly welcomed at the French court at Versailles. A historian has described the scene:

"Franklin was richly dressed. His hair was carefully arranged by a French *perruquier.* He wore an admirably fitting suit of plain black velvet. Ruffles of elaborate embroidery and snowy whiteness adorned his wrists and bosom. White silk stockings aided in showing the perfect proportions of his frame. Large silver buckles were on his shoes. No one could accuse him of failing in due respect for the king. His costume was superb, and was such as was then

worn, on important occasions, by American gentlemen of the highest rank.

"The audience took place at Versailles, on the morning of the 29th of March (1778). Each of the American envoys rode in his own carriage, attended by the usual retinue of servants. On the way they were cheered with the utmost enthusiasm by the crowd. The king, Louis XVI, received them with extreme courtesy, and the queen, Marie Antoinette, was marked in her attentions to Franklin.

"Who can describe the exultation, the rapture, the tears with which these tidings were received by the patriots of America? On the 6th of May, General Washington drew up his little band at Valley Forge to announce the great event, and to offer God prayers and thanksgivings."

Franklin did as much in the courts of Europe as even Washington could do in the fields of America to achieve the independence of their beloved country.

When Lafayette returned to France from America, in 1779, he brought word that Benjamin Franklin had been appointed by Congress the one minister with full power from the new

government of the United States of America. There were rejoicings throughout the realm of France. The newly elected ambassador was presented at the French court with greater splendor, if possible, than before. So great was Franklin's popularity that it has been said that if he had been an angel from heaven or a visitor from Mars, he could hardly have been received with more devoted enthusiasm. Wherever he went, in the streets of Paris, he and his grandsons were followed by admiring crowds. If he went into a theater the actors themselves joined with the audience in giving *le grand Franklin* a welcome. For once an American "set the fashions" for Paris. Everything that could bear his name—hats, coats, gloves, canes, snuff boxes and the like—were styled *à la Franklin.* There was scarcely a house in the city which did not boast a Franklin stove or portrait. Poets addressed odes and sonnets to him. Women crowned him publicly with flowers and kissed him on the hands and cheeks. When Voltaire and Franklin kissed each other, the most distinguished members of the Academy of the French "immortals" went wild with joy.

Among the scientists, philosophers and *sa-*

vants of France Franklin was regarded with a respect bordering on reverence. He often met or corresponded with Montgolfier, the inventor of balloons, and with Dr. Guillotin, supposed to have invented the terrible machine for cutting off people's heads. But this was not true, nor did he die by the guillotine as is frequently stated. Dr. Guillotin was an eminent French physician who merely advised the use of the mechanical contrivance which came to bear his name, because it was considered a humane way to put criminals to death. Franklin also corresponded with Dr. Mesmer, whose name lives in the word *mesmerism,* and many other men of renown whose names would fill a page. Chief among these was Baron Turgot, the famous financier and statesman who originated the Latin epigram about his friend Franklin, which has been translated into a number of forms of which perhaps the most familiar is, *"He snatched the lightning from heaven and the scepter from tyrants."*

When the surrender of Lord Cornwallis to Washington's army at Yorktown, in October, 1781, was reported to Lord North, Franklin's old enemy, still Prime Minister of England, he "re-

ceived the tidings as he would have taken a ball in his breast. He threw his arms apart. He paced wildly up and down the room, exclaiming from time to time, 'O God, it is all over!' "

By this time nearly all England was clamoring for the king to stop the war with America. The king was forced to surrender to the English people as well as to the American armies. General Conway, the member of Parliament who had moved the repeal of the Stamp Act sixteen years before, also on the 28th of February, 1782, presented as a motion in the House of Commons:

"*Resolved,* That the reduction of the colonies by force of arms is impracticable."

A violent debate followed this resolution. The vote was finally carried. This practically ended the war for American independence. The announcement of the result was hailed with deafening applause in the House.

Though it was late at night when this virtual order was passed, they were immediately presented to the king. George the Third was in a pitiable state of mind. Though not yet forty-four years old, he was aged before his time. Half crazy in all his dealings, he seemed utterly demented whenever the American colonies were

mentioned. On receiving the message from Parliament he flew into a passion, threatened to give up his crown, and abandon England forever. But he was forced to yield and dismiss the Tory ministry that had abused and insulted Dr. Franklin, and had schemed to oppress the American people.

Overtures were again made to "that crafty American" to induce him to treat with England by leaving his French friends out altogether. The British minister pompously hinted to Vergennes, the French premier, what might be done in case "England grants America independence."

Minister Vergennes laughingly replied that England's consent would not be necessary. "America has already won her independence," he answered. "She does not ask it of you. There is Dr. Franklin. He will answer you on that point."

"To be sure," added the old ambassador, "we do not consider it necessary to bargain for that which is our own. We have bought our independence at the expense of much blood and treasure, and are in full possession of it."

John Adams and John Jay were sent by Con-

gress to aid Franklin in negotiating the terms of peace. Without Franklin's philosophy, tact and humor these men would have offended the French by their narrowness and suspicions, and would even then have defeated their own ends with England. There were many preliminaries and delays, but the British king and the new ministry came to terms with the American commissioners, and the treaty of peace was signed, in 1783, and the long and cruel war of the Revolution was brought to a close.

CHAPTER XIX

Home at Last

Still another year passed before the old philosopher was allowed to return to America. He was weary and weak, now that the great struggle of his life was over, suffering from gout and other acute infirmities. While he was waiting in France, Thomas Paine submitted at least a part of the manuscript of his great infidel book, "The Age of Reason," to Dr. Franklin for his opinion of it.

The aged statesman who still regretted his *erratum,* when, a youth of nineteen, he published a skeptical pamphlet which won him the wrong kind of fame in England, wrote Mr. Paine an extended criticism of which the following is part:

"I would advise you not to attempt unchaining the tiger, but to burn this piece before it is seen by any other person; whereby you will save yourself a great deal of mortification by the enemies it may raise against you, and perhaps a great deal of regret and repentance. If men are so wicked *with* religion, what would they be if *without* it?"

It was only during his last year in France that William Franklin came over from England to be reconciled to his father.

Franklin was now so prostrated by his infirmities that he was unable to call upon the king to take his final leave, but the queen sent her sedan chair to carry him to the coast. On the 12th of July, 1785, the aged ambassador started on the slow journey from Passy to Havre, surrounded by admiring friends who escorted him all the way. He was met at different points on the road by great men in the French Church

and State, and they entertained him with royal honors.

He sailed from Havre with his grandsons on the 28th of July, 1785. During the voyage of seven weeks he wrote three treatises as able and useful as any that he ever composed. On the morning of the 14th of September the ship cast her anchor in the Delaware River opposite Philadelphia. He wrote of his arrival:

"My son-in-law came with a boat for us. We landed at the Market Street wharf, where we were received by a crowd of people with huzzahs, accompanied with acclamations quite to my door. Found my family well. God be thanked and praised for all his mercies."

The Market Street wharf mentioned here was the same landing at which he had arrived, sixty-two years earlier, a tired, dirty, rain-soaked, hungry, runaway lad. His own description of his reception was much too modest, for he was given such a greeting as only Benjamin Franklin could have received. A cannon volley announced his arrival. The church bells—with the dear old Liberty Bell—rang out the glad tidings. At this pre-arranged signal the people flocked out of their houses and hurried toward the river,

groups shouting to one another, "Franklin is come! Dr. Franklin has come home!" Companies of his fellow-townsmen escorted him to the modest home of his daughter. The faculty of the University of Pennsylvania, officers of the American Philosophical Society, the company of the State militia he had organized, and the justices of the city, all hastened to do honor to the grand old man of two continents.

The Pennsylvania Assembly, which was in session when the old doctor returned, sent him a complimentary address. Washington, at Mount Vernon, wrote him a letter of congratulation. Franklin's ocean voyage had benefited him so much that they ventured to elect him President or Governor of Pennsylvania. Of this honor he wrote whimsically to a friend:

"I had not firmness enough to resist the unanimous desire of my country folk, and I find myself harnessed again in their service for another year. They engrossed the prime of my life. They have eaten my flesh, and seem resolved now to pick my bones."

President Franklin was carried to and from the State House (Independence Hall) in a litter. The following year he was re-elected president

and again in 1787. That year he was also made a delegate to the convention which met in Philadelphia to frame the Constitution of the United States. He was then so feeble that all his speeches were read by his colleague, "it being inconvenient for the doctor to remain on his feet."

One motion proposed by Dr. Franklin is memorable because it is in marked contrast with the impression many have given concerning the aged statesman's religious opinions:

"*Resolved,* That henceforth, prayers imploring the assistance of heaven, and its blessings on our deliberations be held in the Assembly every morning before we proceed to business; and that one or more of the clergy of this city be requested to officiate in that service.

"MR. PRESIDENT: The small progress we have made, after four or five weeks' close attendance and continual reasonings with each other; our different sentiments on almost every question is, methinks, a melancholy proof of the imperfection of the human understanding.

"I have lived, sir, a long time. And the longer I live the more convincing proofs I see of this truth, that *God governs in the affairs of men.*

And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid? We have been assured, sir, in the Sacred Writing, that 'except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.' I firmly believe this. And I also believe that, without His concurring aid we shall see in this political building no better than the building of Babel."

Strange to say, the men of the Constitutional Convention had been so imbued with French infidelity so prevalent at the time that, even against this appeal by their benignant old mentor, they voted down his resolution. Franklin sadly recorded upon his written speech the fate of his motion, "The convention, except three or four persons, thought prayers unnecessary." The dear, kind old doctor! With him religion was tenderly interwoven with patriotism and patriotism with him was the *religion of country.*

The feeble old patriot received a constant stream of friends and strangers in his daughter's home and cheerfully chatted with them all. In entertaining them he was especially assisted by his three grandchildren. The last public act of his life was to sign a memorial to the new Con-

gress to abolish slavery in the United States.

Even after he was confined to his bed he worked diligently writing his "Autobiography" and letters to many of his friends. One visitor, he thus wrote, "found me very ill with severe pains which followed a fall I had on the stone steps that lead into my garden, whereby I was much bruised and my wrist sprained so as to render me incapable of writing for several weeks."

In his final illness Franklin's suffering was acute. He spoke of his death with characteristic serenity. One day he was seized with a fearful paroxysm of pain while a clergyman was present. The dying man seeing the minister about to leave the room, called out in his agony:

"O no—don't go away! These pains will soon be over. They are for my good. And besides, what are the pains of a moment in comparison with the pleasures of eternity!"

An old Quaker woman, Sarah Humphries, nursed Dr. Franklin in his last illness, related to the Rev. David Ritter an incident in connection with a picture of Christ suffering upon the cross, when the clergyman expressed surprise at seeing it in Franklin's room:

"Thee knows, David, that many make a great fuss about religion who have very little. And many who say but little have a good deal. He was never satisfied if a day passed away unless he had done some one a service. Benjamin Frankiin was one of that sort.

"I will tell thee how that picture came here. Many weeks ago, as he lay, he beckoned me to him, and told me of this picture, upstairs, and begged I would bring it to him. I brought it. His face brightened up as he looked at it, and he said:

" 'Aye, Sarah, there is a picture worth looking at. That is the picture of Him who came into the world to teach men to love one another.'

"After looking at it wistfully for some time, he said, 'Sarah, set this picture up over the mantelpiece, right before me as I lie. I like to look at it.'

"When I fixed it up he looked at it very much, and indeed died with his eyes fixed upon it."

He died at eleven o'clock at night, April 17, 1790, at the age of eighty-four. Twenty thousand people attended his funeral. He was buried in Christ Church yard, beside his wife and little Francis. His son William, living

in England on a British pension, and his daughter, Sarah, survived him.

He was the greatest of all teachers of industry and thrift. In many-sidedness, in wide recognition and lasting influence, Benjamin Franklin was the greatest man America ever produced. He prided himself on having been chosen to stand in the presence of five of the greatest monarchs of his day, and once referred to this fact in connection with the words of King Solomon the Wise (whose Proverbs are not so familiar as household words as the maxims of Franklin himself):

"Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings."

THE END

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